

THE
CORRESPONDENCE
OF
TWO LOVERS.

1620
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THE
CORRESPONDENCE
OF
TWO LOVERS.

INHABITANTS OF LYONS.

PUBLISHED FROM THE FRENCH ORIGINALS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

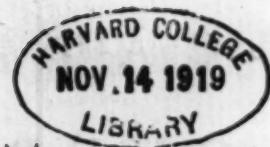
Mortem orant: tandem cali corona tueri. VIRG.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY ZACHARIAH JACKSON,
FOR GRUER AND M'ALLISTER, NO. 59, DAME-STREET,

M.DCC.LXXXIX.

1746 p. 160



✓ Hayes fund
(2 vol. in 1)

DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY ANNE LINDSAY.

MADAM,

THE great and fair have ever been looked up to for protection by writers, or inspired the theme with their own heroism and delicacy of sentiment.— Truth renders an affecting story doubly interesting; and the present appears with that additional recommendation. The loves of Teresa and Faldoni are recent in the memory of the inhabitants of Lyons, and their letters are probably written with a degree of tenderness and pathos not inferior to the

Epistles

Epistles of the celebrated Eloisa and Abelard, while their catastrophe displays an instance of more earnest and unconquerable attachment. Under the patronage of a Lady universally honoured for her distinguishing taste and refinement, that the following pages will be more immediately and more respectfully noticed by the Public, is with a pleasing confidence presumed by,

MADAM,

Your most obliged,

Devoted Servant,

THE EDITOR.

THE
CORRESPONDENCE
OF
TWO LOVERS.

LETTER I.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

WHAT a separation ! what a disagreeable journey ! Shut up in a chaise, running post, and wherefore ? To remove far from the friend I love. The days never appeared so tedious to me : surely the hours are everlasting ! I seem to be travelling to the world's end. I view the rolling wheels, and in mental soliloquy say, Is all this agitation to distress me ? Were I alone, I should enjoy the sweet solace of my tears ; lost to every object around me, I should enter Lyons with the full impression of thy image, as if I had just left thee. But resignation is our duty : I am going to see an invaluable mother ; I will, therefore, study to be contented, and if I can but forget—Not a word

more! If I have the discretion to avoid that subject, every thing will be right. Heavens! what a languor invades my senses! I can scarce write a few words connectedly. Charming cousin! Are you really less dear to me? No; but indeed my heart is sick! The weather is dismal, the snow clogs our way, and I am pierced with cold. However, we have gained the shelter of an inn at last, and as soon as I reach the fire-side, I snatch up a pen, but doubt whether you can read my scrawl; for neither ink, paper, pen, hand, head, nor heart is fit for any thing. My father slept all the way; Madame Deschamps held a book in her hand; and I was absorbed in meditation. The house of my dear aunt ever presented itself before me; I bade adieu to my apartment, to the garden, to our favourite tree.—They are no more to me. In reality I do not regret Paris, but our conversations, our amusements, our walks, the pleasure of being together, the delight of mutual confidence, the inestimable charm of congenial ideas. No! were I to go round the world, I could never replace them. What means this excessive regret, and these unabating tears? I have been absent from my cousin before, but never experienced this wretched solitude, which renders nature around me a dreary wilderness: I feel an universal desertion!—I dare not finish the sentence; I dread to name him who is the cause of all this disorder; reason itself forsakes me; I would banish the idea of him, but cannot escape from it. Ah! what emotions have his features raised in my bosom! How have the accents of his voice pervaded my very soul! I still see him, I still hear him! This sympathetic sensibility is the inspiration of Heaven; no language can describe

scribe it. While I am fleeing from him, he is still nearer than ever. My passions are in a tempest, and my heart is the turbid ocean. Write to me speedily, for I need all your consolation. In three days we shall be at Lyons. This journey does but fret me; since I must remove from you, would it were to a greater distance!

P. S. I will take care of your linnet: recollect how he was caressed when you told any one that he was intended for me. If I am mentioned, make me—What? My compliments? But, to what purpose? Have I not bid him adieu? The matter is concluded. How can we ever come near each other again? May he be happy! My heart, while it continues to beat, must pray for his prosperity.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

HOW amiable are your attentions! To salute me with a letter on my first arrival! This is almost anticipating my wishes. It contains nothing but endearments, and yet it expresses an uncommon degree of pity for me, as if it announced ill news. Some passages are too affecting. He was, then, distressed at my departure! You say his eyes streamed with tears.—Mischiefous creature! You tell me this, and then, as though nothing had been told, expect to see me tranquil;

you urge me to conquer an unfortunate passion ; and reason on the subject with a provoking indifference. Yes, charming cousin, I have reflected on every particular as you have stated it. A foreigner ! A stranger ! Perhaps destitute of fortune and family. Shall the Count de St. Cyran, the proudest of mankind, adopt him for a son-in-law ? That would be a miracle indeed ; to accomplish which, requires no common train of circumstances. Besides, am I the object of his thoughts ? Will he ever see me again ? These are strong arguments against giving the reins to such a frenzy. But what would you have me do ? My heart is smitten ; and mirth, amusement, and serenity are no more. Sometimes I am for whole days capriciously silent ; I dislike people with a cheerful countenance ; they put me out of temper. I care not for diversions, and make an ungracious return for attempts to please me. I find no satisfaction but by retiring within myself. Then I behold you again ; I run over all our old scenes.— This evening as I looked up at the moon, I considered that you might survey it at the same instant ; and I was transported with the idea of this association. I have frequently ascended the staircase of the house to go to your apartment, and discovered my mistake with inexpressible anguish. I am no where at home, but seem to be got into a new world. Dear residence of my forefathers ! Delightful scenes of my childhood ! Why have I forsaken you ? This is frequently my soliloquy.— Constantia, I must make one confession to you, as it will greatly relieve my mind. I dare not flatter myself with the hope that he will continue to think of me ; every circumstance tends to chase

me from his remembrance. The impossibility of our ever being united, or even seeing each other again, must banish the image of your unhappy friend from the object of her love. But, could I see him, were he in my company, my charming confidant, I should die with joy. Do you comprehend this language?—Thus I have ventured my secret, yet blush for having imparted it even to you. I cannot bear to read this letter now it is written; and certainly would burn it, but for the testimony which it contains, of that unbounded confidence I place in the friendship of my Constantia.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

I AM just come from the play-house; and though the whole town was there, I seemed to be alone. The piece acted, was, The Village Conjurer. You must recollect a certain walk in the Park of Marly, where we sung the airs in it. Heavens! who was then in company? but, alas! what an alteration! This idea was so impressed on my mind during the performance, that I could not forbear weeping. My mother asked me if I was mad? You know that when one would suppress tears, they gush the faster. This was precisely my case. An immoderate fit succeeded, and I was obliged to leave

the house. Indeed what had I to do there, who was disgusted with every thing, whose wishes centered in retirement? Sometimes I would renounce all connection with nature, but too many ties restrain me. An adored mother, a friend of ten thousand, a friend who cannot be parallelled; and that other, alas! that tyrant—how shall I name him? I sustain a million of anxieties on his account. Amid the whirlwind of jarring passions, I muse when I am spoken to, I answer when nobody speaks to me. My brain is an ocean of troubled thoughts, on which my soul is tost without repose. Some unlucky remembrance strikes my imagination, my heart shrinks, my understanding is bewildered, and my bosom heaves with the deepest sighs. Why am not I mistress of a small portion of necessary dissimulation?—I tremble for fear of a discovery.—Your work-bag is almost finished; the ornaments of it are truly after nature. I have sprinkled a few roses, many thorns, and some of those flowers which they call hearts-ease.—A mighty pretty picture! I assure you. You must come for it yourself; I keep it for none but you, and you shall receive it only here. I have also drawn a portrait in crayons, the resemblance striking, though the original is far enough from me. You smile, and exclaim, Is it possible to copy by memory a figure not seen a dozen times! Yet, my dear friend, it is not that figure, but your own, that I have painted; and I wonder that I never thought of the attempt during the delightful year that I passed at your house. Indeed I have done much in a short time; but, as I do not sleep, every day is longer by half to me than the generality of mankind. I own, between

between ourselves, that I have likewise endeavoured to portray the features of somebody whom it is superfluous to name. But this must be deemed madness, when it is known, that I never examined them in nature's paragon ; indeed I hardly ever dared to look at them. Yet, some God has guided my hand ; I view my own performance with astonishment, as it already displays a likeness. Ah ! dear Constantia, woe to your Teresa, could one man read these lines ; and if I intrusted him with half this degree of humiliating confidence !

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

HOW shall I begin my letter ? Where shall I find words to express the crowding sentiments that seduce me ? Ah ! my friend, I have seen him ; it is he himself, and not a vision ; nay, I view him still. Did you but know !—But, what a relation am I entering on ! I must dispatch.—While I am alone, I snatch up my pen, which rapidly follows the career of my ideas. Attend, and learn the imprudence of your friend. I was at Mass, my eyes indeed fixed on my book, but my mind engaged by that bewitching phantom which never leaves me. Suddenly Deschamps, who was near, whispered to me, and as I turned about, she pointed to a corner of the church.

B 4

On

On looking—O Heavens ! I saw—It was he, he himself ! Yet, it is a wonder how I could discern him, for a cloud immediately involved my sight, and a dizziness seized my understanding. My knees trembled—I fell unconscious to the floor. On my recovery, I was surprised at finding myself in my chamber. My mother supported my head on her bosom, while her arms tenderly embraced me. I seemed to awake from a flattering dream ; all my golden images were fled, and I avoided asking questions of any body, being afraid to open my eyes to a conviction of the deception. But, how treacherous it was of this cruel girl, to raise in me such an agitation ! She has told me since, that he followed our carriage to the very door of the inn. What will become of me ? Whether can I flee ? The enemy of my peace is at hand, one town contains us both ! He has traced my asylum ! When he was far off, I wished him nigh ; now he is nigh, I wish him far off. What a tide of contrary desires ! A chaos of irresolutions prevents my breathing—But, wherefore should he come to Lyons ?—Can it be on my account ?—What is your opinion ?—This conduct announces, a thorough resolution of following me : I apprehend it, and my heart trembles for the consequences. However, I have formed plans of self-defence, and for some hours have felt surprising fortitude ; so that should he actually appear before me, I can answer for my prudence. Surely, I may be ashamed of my late weakness ! Yet, he shall gain no advantage by it, and I will be doubly on my guard in future. I need but call pride and anger to my assistance, and I shall be safe. Adieu ! my dear friend, I have written

written an awkward letter ; but why did he disturb me ! to pursue me to my family recesses, and even the arms of mother ! This is such down-right persecution, that it exasperates me. I really think I hate him. How proud would he be of his triumph, did he suspect that my disorder was occasioned by his presence ; did he see the straits and stratagems to which he drives me ! I have kept all day in my mother's apartment, the windows of which overlook the street. Seated near the Gothic casement, my work in my hand, that street, as I frequently snatched a view of it, appeared a forlorn solitude. Every person who was announced to us, inspired me with returning rapture. I expected to hear him named every instant, without reflecting that he is a stranger to my parents. On retiring to my chamber, I felt the fatigue of a long journey, from the agitation of my mind ; a lumpish mass, I drag heavily through the day. Yesterday I attempted to play a tune on the harp, but my hands deserted their office in the midst of it. If music will not be courted by me, I am decidedly miserable ! What struggles have I to sustain with myself ! What tormenting nights have already been my portion ! How shocking it is, thus to experience nature at war with one's principles ! But, since we cannot change the decrees of fate, we must submit to them.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

YESTERDAY I was in despair; to-day I am at the summit of felicity, perhaps, to-morrow I shall be drowned in tears: thus flows the changeful tide of life, till that final moment when we shall be unconscious of pain or pleasure. You know the good Curate from whom I received my education: he visited us this morning. Figure to yourself your friend at her mother's toilet, reading a book to her in a low voice. Suddenly the door of the room opened, and I saw the Curate enter with a young man.—No, my dear, I did not see him: I arose immediately, threw the book in a chair, and making an awkward curtesy, escaped to my chamber. Breathless I flew to the first chair, with a palpitation of heart that I had never experienced before. I arose, listened at the door, fancied that I heard a noise; this occasioned fresh agitation. My glowing cheek was applied to the lock, while the damps of fear bedewed my forehead. At that instant my governess came to call me; to follow her was indispensable; what excuse could I make! I was so exceedingly confused, that I wished to hide myself. I surveyed my appearance in a glass, and said I could not go in such a figure. While I spoke I attempted an arrangement of my dress; I undid what I had just done, and fancied that I looked worse than before. Deschamps observing this, said, will you

you go, or will you not? They will be puzzled to account for your absence; since they came purposely to see you, and you are not indisposed.— At my desire she took me by the arm, for my legs trembled exceedingly, till we came to the door. I entered without perceiving a single object; there seemed to be a curtain drawn before my eyes. After saluting the company, I took a seat by my mother. The Curate presented his friend to me; Mr. Faldoni (for it was he) made me a profound bow, without speaking a syllable. Madame de St. Cyron put several questions to him about his travels, and his amusements, with that frankness which encourages a return. In the mean time, I began to collect myself, and felt some degree of returning strength. He touched on his residence at Paris. Judge of my situation! I fancied my mother noticed me. I blushed, I turned pale, I arose to look for my work-bag; I thought by changing the scene to escape from my confusion, but only found myself the more embarrassed. I took up a piece of embroidery, and set to work; when he drew near me; and while the Curate talked with my mother, he leaned forward, to inspect, as it were, my employment. Then it was that he asked me in a whisper, if I did not recollect a man whom I had rendered miserable? Not answering him, he sorrowfully withdrew, giving me a look expressive of his inmost soul. The visit was prolonged till it grew tedious to me, for I was on the rack all the time, and sadly needed a respite from my torments. I know not when he went out, though my eyes followed him mechanically, without being sensible of what passed around.

around me. I even thought him present, when he was far off. While I was in a profound reverie, my mother luckily left me free. He is, then, miserable ! said I, and the tears started to my eyelids. During these reflections, every thing suddenly assumed a new face ; I seemed to enjoy a second birth. The dressing room breathed the air of Faldoni ; and he had left that secret charm which attends him, in every corner of it. I felt more cheerful and contented ; and, in fact, have not for a long time known so pure a pleasure. Now, my dear friend, consider, and tell me whether I have not betrayed to him the sentiment of my bosom ? Indeed, I greatly fear it. Otherwise, would he have dared, on the first visit, to risk the discourse he held with me ? Was it not, on his part, at least an indiscreet confession ? I am neither satisfied with him, nor myself. It is in vain that I make a covenant with my eyes, my mouth, and my heart. What will become of me so near the charmer ? Ah ! Cousin, I am a very weak creature ! Your letter has safely reached me, under the protection of friendship. I was doing the honours of a private ball, when it was brought to me ; but I slipped from the company to read it. I now give entirely into the dissipation of the moment ; it is one perpetual round of balls and entertainments. I skip and frolic about ; and after dancing a good deal, am less distracted by disagreeable reflections. Thus I may pass with the world for a votary to pleasure ; but can one be so, when the heart is uneasy at home !

LETTER

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

MY dear friend, to what lengths may a susceptible and unsuspecting soul be driven by an attachment like mine! You will say this remark is made rather too late—but have I really deserved to be imposed on? I assisted at a concert, where Faldoni was present, and happening to intimate a wish to see a new ballad, he undertook to procure it for me. He snatched an opportunity, in the confusion of that noisy assembly, to address me while my mother was absent, and presented the ballad he had promised me. I took and opened it, but on perceiving that it contained a note, slipped in between the leaves, I coloured with shame and surprise, and was about to return his papers, when he disappeared. I felt a degree of resentment against the traitor who had thus ensnared me. You cannot conceive my embarrassment, as I really apprehended that the future colour of my life depended on that fatal writing.—When I returned home, my first intention was to throw myself at my mother's feet, and deliver into her hands the billet unopened. At the moment I was about to accost her, an universal tremor pervaded my frame; the image of my unfortunate lover presented itself to my mind; I saw him banished from me for ever; I heard his lamentations; pity seduced me; I retreated weeping, and flew to shut myself up in my chamber. I laid

laid the billet on the table, my arms lay uselessly languid by my side, and I continued a long time sitting motionless with my eyes fixed on the paper which I dared not open.

—I represented to myself that keeping it was a tacit approbation of its contents, and encouraged additional liberties. But who can resist the temptation of learning sentiments that interest the heart? At first I was for returning the paper without opening it; yet that would have been an expression of contempt, which was not deserved. At last I came to the resolution of opening, and returning it after the perusal. This, which was my ultimate decision, seemed at once calculated to satisfy my inclination and my duty: as if virtue were to be bribed, and there were an understanding between her and the irregularity of the passions! Yet, when I took up the letter, my hand trembled that I could not open it. Two days passed, and Mr. Faldoni came to the house. Imagine a criminal before the judge, and you will have some faint idea of my situation. My blushes, my confusion, my downcast eyes, my perplexity, my distress at his approach, all spoke my inward agitation. He sat down beside me, and I fancied that he was equally affected. He asked in a low whisper, if I liked the ballad!—I made him no answer. Your silence, added he, informs me what you think of the innocent trick, which I have adopted to tell you those sentiments which I could no longer conceal. It is true, answered I, that every trick is beneath a gentleman; but, I did not apprehend one in the present instance. I supposed, Sir, that you had made a mistake; for surely you did

did not design to write to me ; that is a liberty which, I hope, no part of my behaviour has warranted. I will add farther, an assurance that I have not read your billet, and that you shall have it again the first opportunity in my power. He appeared dejected, while I withdrew without allowing him time to make any apology. The company sat down to play, and it was impossible for him to snatch another opportunity of speaking to me. During the game, my eyes were frequently fixed on him, and seeing him change colour, I began to be alarmed. I was on the rack all the evening, and ate no supper. When the hour for that arrived, I gave vent to the sighs which I had suppressed in the day time. A violent fever preyed on my spirits, and in one of the fits I was driven for relief to the opening of the fatal billet, and feasting my eyes with its contents. I read it over a dozen times, and as often bathed it with my tears. See, my friend, see what he has written ; and say if it is possible to be more tender, more respectful, more worthy of my esteem !

LETTER

LETTER VII.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

IS it to you that I venture to write? What an attempt! By what fond hope am I betrayed! Oh, madam, pardon my presumption! pity my madness! I scarce can tell my own wishes—I am grown a stranger to myself. All I discover in the disorder of my senses, is, that I am impelled to you by an irresistible energy. Indeed you must not believe that my passion is voluntary, or that I dare to cherish it with pleasure. Ah! could I flee from you! could I yet escape! I would go to the world's end; I would plunge in solitary recesses where your name could never more alarm my ear. But, I am urged by fate; reason is vanquished, and your presence, by a secret charm, is become necessary to my very existence. I have sought relief in crouds, at a distance from you. I have endeavoured to forget myself in momentary dissipation. But in the midst of univeral distraction, I have been alone; or rather you have attended me every where. Were it not in vain to resist longer? Am I criminal for breaking a silence which no human resolution could preserve? My heart is too full to withhold. Confused with love and grief, finding no resource in it self, it flies to the sacred asylum of Teresa's feet. How would you sympathise with me could you know my condition! I burn, I languish, I hourly consume. Sometimes I could wish never

to

to have seen you ; and flatter myself with the resolution to avoid you, but if I pass a day without seeing you, am on the rack of despondence. I roam about like one distracted ; every thing is wanting to me ; I am obliged to trace you ; and as soon as you appear, a flame rushes through my veins ; my heart springs towards you ; I no longer exist but where you are. Distress ! Anguish ! Inexorable torture ! Consummate horror of hopeless affection ! To love and desire, without daring to confess a passion. To be within reach of happiness, and not obtain it. To behold you every day more lovely and enchanting ! Every day to be more enamoured of your charms ; To save myself by retreat, to face again my beauteous foe, to have recourse to flight, and, after all, to return ! To be allured to the ambuscade, to resist, yet to yield at the very instant that I thought myself triumphant ! Celestial charms ! Inexhaustible source of delight for the happy man who shall be the object of your choice ! Can any situation be more deplorable than mine ? On my knees I conjure you to grant me one word of comfort, or to banish me for ever from your presence ! One word would restore me to life. What do I desire but permission to adore the most charming of her sex that I have seen on earth ? So pure a passion cannot injure you ; and if you will only not forbid it, you will constitute my felicity. I shall contemplate your perfections in silence, cherish your looks, treasure your accents, and return contented. But my hopes are too sanguine, and these are the illusions of an amorous imagination. I own it is audacity to have written to you. I have offended you, and submit to the dictates of your resentment.

resentment. But what resentment can you inflict on me which is not surpassed by the torments I endure from the passion you have kindled in my bosom ?

RURAL FELICITY.

The ballad which accompanied the preceding letter.

I.

HOW soft are the notes of the spring!
What fragrance exhales from the grove!
Ye birds, taught by you, I would sing,
And here I for ever could rove.

II.

Though its bottom is clear, yet the rill
Delights from the rock to descend;
So I, from ambition's steep hill,
My days in the valley would end.

III.

The waves that, so ruffled awhile,
Were, glittering, dash'd in the sun,
On the bordering violets smile,
And kiss them, and murmuring run.

IV.

Thus let me the splendor and strife
Of the rich and exalted forego;
With beauty still sweeten my life,
And love's gentle storm only know!

V.

What joy the bee murmurs impart!
The zephyrs that curl the blue waves,
Soft whispers that steal to the heart,
And echo that talks in the caves!

VI. Peace,

VI.

Peace, babblers, or only repeat
 The silver descent of the springs ;
 Fond shepherds frame here no deceit,
 But scandal has numerous wings.

VII.

I call'd you to witness, 'tis true,
 The vows that to Phillis I swore ;
 Methinks still her blushes I view,
 And, trembling, forgiveness implore.

VIII.

Her charms I will grave in my heart.
 Her name upon every tree ;
 And sooner shall love want a dart,
 Than fickleness harbour with me.

LETTER VIII.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

I BEHOLD him no more. They say he is sick. It is, then, my cruelty that has driven him to despair. His letter did not deserve such treatment ; for, after all, were its contents so impertinent ? What offence could it give me ? He only asked leave to see me—But, why ask that ? Was not he free to come at any hour ? Probably this cautious letter contains a subtile poison ! It must be allowed that he is a great flatterer. Heavens ! how lavish he is in my praise. Tell me frankly, my dear, if you know your cousin in his picture ?

He

He sings the seducing song of the syren, and strews with flowers the path of destruction.—Would to heaven that I possessed one half of the perfections that he says are my portion ! Alas ! I see nothing in myself but a silly girl, void of fortitude and resolution, and not even proof to the soporifics of praise. He calls me kind, and not without reason ; I am but too much so, it was my duty to have been more severe to him.—At least I ought to have answered him with a degree of pride. Is it true, Constantia, that I have not done my duty ? Inexorable duty ! since it tears me from the object of my soul's happiness. I would fain triumph over myself ; but it is registered in Heaven that I must love him.—How he trembled the last time on approaching me !—I was concerned ; and on the point of forgiving him. Haste to me, dear cousin, I need your friendly support. A word from your own lips, spoken on the spot, would be more effectual than all those tardy epistles that do not reach me till after an age of anxious expectation. I am continually led into fresh situations of embarrassment, and a thousand new sentiments succeed to those which I have in confidence imparted to you, by the time I receive your answers. A strange foreboding oppresses my heart, I look backward on the past, and regret with sighs my early years of happiness that must never return. I am consumed with melancholy, and the aspect of Heaven is as gloomy as my soul. For two days the rain has descended in torrents. It is a very seasonable period, truly, to talk to me of merriment ! To-morrow we are to have a noisy assembly of music and dancing in a neighbouring

beauring field. How unwelcome is the invitation! Can one be gay, when the heart is corroded with anguish? Can one smile, when the tears are ready to gush from the eyelids?

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

WHAT a dismal holiday! To see every body in the town, except the object of my peculiar esteem! I have danced and sung; but leave you to guess with what ease! The day was tedious to distraction! How slowly move the hours, under the pressure of sorrow! The customs of the world are very absurd. What occasion had I for this bustle? And did they put themselves to all this trouble on my account? Why was I not consulted on the means of promoting my pleasure? I should then have been left at liberty. I am surrounded by a pile of your letters, and the fatal billet lies in sight; what sighs has it already cost me!—Deschamps has just told me, that he has been seen walking under our windows, but so pale and thin!—Do you not think me mad? I quit my pen, and by mechanical instinct fly to the chamber of my mother. But, reason assumes its empire, and I return.—Yet, I must pause to breathe, it is impossible to proceed immediately, for my spirits are in violent agitation. During my absence,

fence, O Heavens!—There has been laid on my table—treacherous outrage? A paper written by the same hand; Constantia, I am beset by enemies; I will call Deschamps, she too must be of his party. Ah! who would not be so?—She has confessed the whole, but drawn such a moving picture of the seducer as none could resist. She was overcome by his distress! She saw him weep; and he protested that his life depended on the delivery of this note. A refusal might have plunged him into despair, and rendered her accountable for his death. She therefore made him promise this should be the last time of his writing to me, and she would risk my displeasure. But, were she to be banished for it from my presence, she could not have slighted his petition!—I believe so, said I to myself, and concealing my disorder, I threatened to dismiss her, if she exposed me again to such an insult. I threw down the note, and desired her to return it. She excused herself from obeying me, and bade me consider the fatal consequences that might result from her complying with my commands. Between love and vexation, I was half beside myself. Where will this end? I know not what will become of me. Why did I not return his first letter! See how one false step inevitably occasions another! Into what an abyss of difficulties have I plunged myself!

LETTER

LETTER X.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

IT is with trembling that I address you a second time. Forgive me, Madam, forgive me.—I will importune you no more ; I would only obtain pardon, and throw myself at your feet for mercy. Suffer me to raise my dying accents to you ; allow this consolation to my grief, before you condemn me to perpetual silence. How severely have you treated me ! What, then, has been my offence ? With too much veneration for you to declare all my sentiments, I suppressed the glowing expressions ever ready to start from my pen ; and portrayed in fainter colours the ardent emotions of my soul. How imperfect a representation did my letter give of the tumult of my heart ! And yet for that I risked your displeasure, and incurred your indignation ! Wretch that I was ! to write to you. But for that imprudence, you would still condescend to listen to me ; and, perhaps, might gradually have entertained confidence and esteem in my favour. At least if I were not beloved, I should not be hated. One rash moment has deprived me of every thing ; I have put you on your guard against me ; I have obliged you to avoid me ; and thus am become the outcast of despair. The recollection of my past happiness will embitter my future days ; I shall for ever look back with

with unavailing regret to those charming hours when my imagination revelled in felicity. This very evening that you have passed sentence on me, an hour, nay a minute since, how enviable was my situation ! You came to me with a smile ; your eyes beamed benignity on me ; but that look was fatal to Faldoni. My heart was rapt with celestial joy ; a supernatural courage inspired me ; I was lost in the delicious transport. How was it possible to resist the necessity of loving you and acquainting you with my passion ? Often was I tempted to embrace your knees with all the humility of a suppliant, and to desire you would condescend to hear me. Why should he who loves you forbear to confess it ? Do we not speak the same language to the Being above all beings for his adorable perfections ? And are not you the Divinity of my heart ? Yes, it is even so ; you are the object of my worship when I prostrate myself in the solemn temples. While my prayers ascend to Heaven, they are addressed to you alone. Could I but explain the idea I have formed of your soul, I should need no other justification. I consider you as an angelic being, born to promote the happiness of all around you. I believe that you do not entertain a thought which does not tend to some generous action. Were I desirous of painting virtue in her most amiable form I would make choice of yours. Wherever you appear, the air that you breathe, your dress, your words, your looks, the most trivial of your actions, is attended with that charm which is so peculiarly your own. At sight of you all eyes are centered on your person ; every heart is led in pleasing captivity. When you speak, the happy hearer

hearer dreads an interruption ; your conversation suspends the soul with the magic of irresistible harmony. Often when I am absent from you I surprise myself repeating what you have said ; your very motions become natural to me, and I copy them without intention. What could I not do, inspired by the ambition of pleasing you ! You have entirely transformed me ! Your taste is become mine ; my way of thinking has aspired to the elevation of yours.—In the mean time my flames inwardly burn more fiercely ; my sufferings increase. I die every moment, yet should resign life with less regret, did your days glide serenely. But I have seen the tears stream from your eyes, while you painted to your friend the misfortune of too great sensibility. Can you, then, experience that misfortune ? Can an angel feel the pains of humanity ? Perhaps you to have loved. Surely, then, you must sympathise with me, if you are no stranger to that ill-starred passion, for never mortal shared its agonies like me. Where is Teresa to save me from myself ? Why do you flee from me ? Why refuse me an answer ? Behold me trembling at your feet, bathed in tears, intreating you to restore the peace, joy, and fortitude that I have lost ! Break this cruel silence, or I shall take it for a confirmation of your displeasure, and, influenced by that idea, rush on an act of desperation. My blood shall flow in your sight ; my last looks shall be directed to you ; and if in a better world, the soul retains the affections which it owned in this life, charming Teresa, the sacred flame which you have inspired in my bosom, shall glow beyond the tomb.—I must conclude. Oh ! my full heart ! I have

thousand things to say, but want expression. Most generous of your sex ! favour me with an answer. In mere pity indulge me with a line ! If you continue inflexible, I will deliver myself from this hateful load of life, to avoid your contempt.—Then, perhaps, you will feel some regret for having shortened those days that I wished to devote to my love.

LETTER XI.

TERESA TO FALDONI.

WHY have you obliged me to write you an answer ? I was in possession of happiness, but am going to lose it. I have hitherto avoided looking into myself, and surveying the state of my heart. Resolved to continue in that prudent ignorance, I indulged without remorse ideas which I should have condemned, had I traced them to their source. I was sometimes, it is true, alarmed at them but soon recovered the bewitching illusion. This fortunate error might have continued much longer. Why have you removed it ? What have you done ! Where was the necessity of speaking to me ; but above all of writing to me ? Ah ! leave me to myself ; forbear to see me ; forbear to acquaint me with sentiments which I cannot approve.—I fear that I shall retain but too much, for my peace, of a remembrance that I ought to erase. I have said enough. I took up my pen with a resolution to attempt only to calm,

to

to console, and to persuade you to live ; but my heart betrays itself at every syllable. The apprehensions that I suffer at the same time leave no doubt of my guilt. What opinion must you have of an indiscreet girl who suffers you to see her weakness ! I repeat my request ; remove far from me ; write no more ! Why should you distress me farther ? Are not my sufferings already sufficient ? Why did I ever know you ? What grounds have you for hope ? Am I fated to complete your wishes ? Do you not perceive that every circumstance rises in opposition ? Would it not, therefore, be most prudent to flee from each other ? Yes ; that is the necessary and wisest conduct. I to love you ! alas ! were it so, we should only be more wretched. I know not what I have written ! am greatly distressed ; tremble at every thing ; forbode a thousand disasters ; indeed you have made me very miserable !

LETTER XII.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

HAVE not you wondered at my silence ? You supposed, to be sure, that I was sick ? Yes, I am so ; my head and my heart are alike disordered. I do not live ; but die daily. My torment is inexpressible ; and has quite soured my disposition. My taste, my sentiments, my conduct is no longer the same. I, who, was so scrupulously deli-

cate in all the principles of the most rigid honour; I, who trembled at the shadow of a fault; what will you say on learning, that I am now at the mercy of a stranger and my governess? I have ventured to receive letters; have had the weakness to answer them; but once, though, and to prevent consequences with which I was threatened. But I have done it, and that has obliged me still to permit the rash man who besieges your Teresa, to put others into my hand. Dear Constantia, what will become of me? My tears start at the question; and perhaps will one day be my only resource. Deschamps employs all her address to comfort me. You know the goodness of her heart, who has lived with me from my birth, and loved me as her own child. The poor creature mingles tears with mine, execrates all lovers, and the next moment presents me with fresh notes from the suitor who courts her patronage. What would you advise me to do? Must I turn her away? Must I forbid the other access to the house? Must I sacrifice myself? I know the severity of my father? on the least suspicion of such a correspondence I am ruined; perhaps I should never more behold the day; his vengeance would plunge me into the gloom of a cloister. That would be the death of my mother! Best of mothers! Yesterday she spoke kindly of him who persecutes her daughter—She drew his panegyric. Had you but seen the embarrassment of your guilty friend! I could not have been more confused at hearing my own praise. What it forebodes I know not; but for some days my faculties have seemed suspended. Where is happiness to be found? and what is that chimera which eludes the pursuit of mankind?

mankind ? A meteor that leads them to a precipice. I fancied that a virtuous passion might strew a few roses among the thorns of life ; I fancied that, considered our mutual wants and dependencies on each other, the heart might look out for a kindred heart, and by yielding to the allurements of sympathy, fulfil the intention of nature. It had not occurred to me, that what is right in the order of nature, is frequently contrary to the principles of society ; and that the opinion of the world is formed of us, not from things really meritorious, but from the paltry substitutes of fashion. How can I rectify this error in my opinion ? My original ideas are bewildered ; and I have no certain rule left for my conduct.—If conscience tells me, that I ought to obey the eternal laws inscribed on my heart, what doubts and distractions confound me ! Yet why should we embitter this transitory life with such solicitous speculations ?—You will think that I have a peculiar way of reasoning, and wonder, perhaps, at the singular turn of my morality. Courage, my dear friend ! My system shall not injure my manners : I submit with dutiful acquiescence to the laws of which I complain.—The blooming spring returns unwelcome to me ; our concerts, our assemblies, our plays, will be no more. Farewell to the opportunities that I enjoyed of seeing the object of my love ; I must forego these for banishment to rural solitudes. How suddenly is the face of nature changed ! I knew the time when I was transported at regaining the fields, and viewing the return of their verdure. But it must be confessed that there is much insipidity and sameness in a country life. We shall set out for Ormes

at the end of April. Will not my Constantia come to enliven her friend's solitude? I tremble by anticipation at this journey: for it is already the subject of discourse. You know how fond my mother is of her estate; every year she makes some improvement on it; she amuses herself in planting, and delights in the enjoyment of her own labour; to walk beneath the shades that have sprung up under her inspection; to resume those daily employments which she has unwillingly given up in town. There every hour has its allotted busines; she forms around her seat a little empire, by her bounties. She is the queen of the villagers, who love her to adoration; and she gives up her gentle soul with delight to all the minutiae of rural oeconomy. My father, engaged in lawsuits, is frequently absent; he proposes to spend the spring in Paris, we only see him here like a flash of lightning. He came in last when Mr. Faldoni was in the house, whom he had never seen. You know his haughty manner of looking for the first time at people whom he thinks his inferiors. I was not without apprehension at his entrance; every body rose as he approached, and my mother presented Mr. Faldoni to him as the friend of the Curate. He surveyed him with a stately air, gave him a slight inclination of the head, and darted into another apartment, muttering some expressions of civility, which were lost at the door. I was confounded at this reception; Mr. Faldoni bore it like a man accustomed to the world, who is always easy in every situation. He continued to converse with seeming cheerfulness, but I perceived that he coloured, and that he was not very well pleased with the master of the

the house. Were I not the daughter of Monsieur de St. Cyran, I should be at no loss what name to give to this cruel surliness; nor would my reflections spare the arrogance of a gentleman, whose manners exhibit the loftness which should be reserved for his sentiments. But it is my duty to lament and hold my tongue!

LETTER XIII.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

WHAT occasions your present inquietude! Wherefore those sighs which steal from you; those melancholy glances directed at me; that languor which invades your whole frame? Can I be the author of your sufferings! My doubts are too distressing! condescend to relieve me from them; if you speak but the word, I will depart. But you retain a confirmed silence; I perceive that you dread my approach, and study to avoid me. If by some lucky chance I am thrown near you, your distress is visible, you veil yourself with every surrounding object, and seem to court an asylum in every thing from my presence. Your younger sister never leaves you; and when I would avail myself of a moment's solitude to speak to you, you call her to your relief. Is it from me that you flee? Is it me that you are obliged to mistrust? I have, then, lost your esteem! You heap contempt on me; and join, in disgracing me,

with him whose blood and pride you inherit. My situation is dismal ; and I must deliver myself from its horrors, I will go ; I will flee ; I will tear myself from this fatal spot. Yes, you shall be obeyed, too cruel fair, you shall be satisfied. But I shall go forlorn, desperate, the victim of a deadly poison, detesting life, abhorring nature, and wishing for nothing but annihilation in the tomb. It is too much at once to endure your hatred and the torments of a never-dying passion ! While there was the least hope of moving you, I found resources in my fortitude ; but now the bright illusion is vanished, my strength forsakes me, and my heart fails. Adieu ! thou most lovely and most adored of women ! Soft cheerer of my life ! Bright angel ! whom I thought the minister of Heaven to ease the load of my existence. I shall no more behold you ; the sentence is past, I must leave you, I must abandon every comfort !

LETTER XIV.

TERESA TO FALDONI.

STAY, Faldoni ; and do not add to my distress by your removal ! It is too late. O, sir, to what an extremity have you reduced me ! Must I acknowledge to you a sentiment which I perceive with terror, and which I endeavoured to conceal from myself ? How much, alas ! was I mistaken, in fancying that the desire which I felt to please you

you arose only from esteem ! I gave myself up to it without apprehension ; I eagerly courted the danger, and now cannot hope for assistance from reason. I have abandoned her empire ; my heart is overcome by its own frailty, and I have not the least glimpse of deliverance. O you, whom I believe to be virtuous, do not disappoint my expectation ; shew yourself such as I would be if able. Prostrate before you my eyes stream with tears, that bathe the characters as I form them. It is to you, to your humanity that I appeal in behalf of an unfortunate woman whose sufferings proceed from you. I no longer desire you to forsake me ; I am conscious that I could not support the loss of you ; but, for heaven's sake, moderate those sentiments which I too sadly partake, and wish to bury in oblivion ! Shew me but a glimpse of that affection which drives me to distraction. If my life is really valuable to you, do not increase those fires with which I consume. Gracious God ! What is my condition ! Do I, then, dare to confess such secrets ; I who had sworn to let them descend with me to the grave ? I should have veiled my disgrace with the shades of death ! What is become of my pride ? Have I entirely lost my boasted dignity of sentiment ? You are the first man who has mentioned love to me, and I surrender my heart without a struggle ! I give myself up to your mercy, while you solicit my pity. Dispose, then, of my lot, since my affection for you is decreed. I will no more look forward into futurity for evils that cannot be avoided ; and voluntarily shut my eyes on the dangerous consequences of so alarming a connection. I have been a long while prevented by solicitous apprehensions from

embracing the happiness that lay before me.— Even at this instant of writing to you, I am oppressed with melancholy. I cannot be said to guide my pen. Ah ! Sir, do I make you a confident of my distress ? Yes, your candid soul is the sacred repository to which I trust the emotions of my own. I fly to your arms, which are expanded to receive me, and am happy in reposing on the bosom of virtue. Can you deceive my expectations, and become the object of my aversion ? No ; you will be generous, and not abuse my confidence. You may expect every thing from me with this limitation. If agreeable, call me your friend, your sister ; I promise you the tenderness of one. What blameless pleasures will flow from such an union ! An union which innocence itself may avow, with transport. It will restore to me that confidence which I have lost. A blush will no more overspread my countenance, when I hear your name ; at your approach I shall not be disturbed by that fear which at present alarms me ; I shall listen to your discourse without apprehension ; and shall answer you no longer with the tremulous voice of a criminal. I must love but the sentiment I propose to admit, will fill the vacuity of my heart ; and perhaps any other is troublesome. Love is so violent a passion, that we should be very careful to avoid its tyranny. O you, who will be ever dear to me, grant me my petition ! Recollect your fortitude ; submit without murmuring to the rigour of my fate ; and content yourself with the friendship which I proffer to you. Consider that we may see and speak to each other without remorse ; be united in indissoluble bands ; enjoy a mutual participation

ticipation of pains and pleasures. And will not all this be a considerable degree of happiness? What more has one a right to expect from the indulgence of a prosperous love?

LETTER. XV.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

BY what charm have you instantaneously effaced every vestige of my sufferings? Is it possible that I can be he who called on death in pity to strike me with his dart? And what, then, are you, who can at your pleasure raise me from the depth of misery, to the supreme pinnacle of felicity? O extasy of love! O transporting delirium of joy to which I have hitherto lived a stranger! Are you, indeed become my friend and sister? I may now tell you every hour that I love you. You will condescend to hear me, and I shall be blessed with the tenderest confession from your own lips. Is not all this an illusion? Have I rightly understood the contents of your bewitching letter, which I could devour with my kisses? Or has not my two sanguine passion betrayed me to a mistake, in supposing the charming epistle was meant for me? Gods! how soft is the language! How has it elevated me in my own estimation! Yes, I will justify your choice, I will render myself worthy of your regard, you shall have no occasion to blush for the object of
your

your love. I deceive you ! I make an ungrateful return for the confidence reposed in me ! Ah ! Teresa, you know not the power of your sceptre, and the awful obedience which it commands. There is no heart so savage but it must be charmed to softness by the influence of your eyes ; even vice would receive the stamp of virtue at sight of your perfections.—I deceive you, and provoke the dreadful vengeance of your threatened hatred ! How could you apprehend me capable of such a treachery, too suspicious friend ! Heavens ! when I degenerate to such perjury let me be annihilated ! May the avenging thunderbolt of divine displeasure consume my very ashes, and not a trace remain that such a monster ever trod the earth !—But no more of such gloomy ideas ! My eager fancy paints rapturous pictures of our blameless union. You will suffer me to read the rising emotions of your heart ; you will even allow me to share them, and we shall henceforth possess but one soul. Yes ; I submit to your pleasure ; consider me as a brother—I would be every thing dear to you. Why cannot you allow me a more tender name ? But any one will be agreeable that marks the friendship between us. For my part I shall take the liberty, Teresa, to call you my angel, my treasure, my life. Why should you not be mine ? You shall be my soul's best good. How shall I bless the happy moments when I may enjoy your presence ! What pangs do I endure from your absence ! I have hardly an opportunity of speaking to you once in a week. Yesterday you were visible to me but for a moment. And then how plunged in sorrow ! For God's sake, get the better of a melancholy that destroys me ; listen to the

the persuasive voice of nature ; banish far away those apprehensions that would interrupt our felicity. Youth quickly vanishes ; the years have wings ; and age surprises us without having tasted pleasure. What evil can flow from so refined a sentiment ? You are mistaken, Teresa ; virtue cannot disapprove an honourable inclination, and in a generous heart love embellishes every perfection. Since I felt this passion for you, my taste is improved and ennobled ; I have more exalted ideas of the beautiful and sublime ; and I never leave you without the ambition of rendering myself more worthy of your esteem. I should blush at present to commit a weakness ; and from the elevation to which you have raised me, I view with contempt the grovelling passions that degrade humanity. How respectable is a sincere affection ! A lover seems to be under the protection of universal nature, and to claim the sympathy of all his fellow creatures. What a new appearance has the world assumed in my eyes ! I am surrounded with a perpetual scene of enchantments. How charming was the walk where you just shewed yourself ! You seemed to leave your traces behind you, as the fabulous deities scattered over their paths ambrosial odours. I still behold your light garment floating on the grass ; and sit down with rapture on the spot marked by your footsteps. Oh ! how lovely was my Teresa when she graced the ball that evening with her presence ! Your dancing, your attractions, your dress, was universally admired ; a greater degree of elegance and modesty could never unite. I was jealous of your partners ; how happy were they in meeting the glances of your eyes ;

eyes ; in approaching that symmetry of form ; in pressing a hand which might communicate the thrill of extasy to the heart of a king ! M*** whom you honoured with your arm, and who walked a long time in your company, racked my bosom with a sensation I had never felt before. You had refused me that favour, and I was reduced to the humiliating necessity of following mournfully behind. Ah ! Teresa, what did I not suffer from your denial ! How painful it is to be condemned to silence when the heart glows with love, and the words crowd to the lips to express with energy the passion by which we are consumed ! What must they suffer who love you without hope, if the favoured object whom you condescended to encourage, and bless with your smiles, has reason to complain !—Do I complain ? Can I be so unjust ? Am I not indulged with your friendship ? What more can my presumption require ?

LETTER XVI.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

YOU know the indulgent fondness of my mother, and how studious she is to promote my pleasures. In the absence of Mons. de St. Cyran, who has made an excursion into the country, we have had a delightful entertainment at the distance

tance of a small league from the town. Monsieur the Curate, Faldoni, a smiling group of accomplished young people, my mamma ever happy to see all around her pleased, a virtuous freedom that accompanied us in our pastimes, a trip on the water, music and dances, a cheerful supper, the moon beaming to light us on our return home—so charming a scene altogether still delights my imagination in the recollection. While every body besides was lost in the general bustle, I enjoyed one of the sweetest hours of my life. *He* was near me, and spoke to me.—Every word that flowed from his lips entered the very recesses of my soul, and diffused inexpressible happiness. My eyes were not dry ; and as I fixed them on him, emboldened by night, I perceived his were wet with tears. Divine sympathy, how great is thy power ! I felt an emotion unknown before, and raised my handkerchief for relief. I was obliged to sit down, when a gloomy train of ideas took possession of my mind, and the evils that awaited me appeared in dreadful prospect. I was quite overcome by it. The Curate, who was with us, appeared concerned for my disorder, viewing us both with a look of the most friendly compassion. My fancy resembled him to a patriarch surrounded by his children. The venerable pastor ! He has none of that austerity common to his brethren ; his lips impart words of peace and consolation like a falutary balsam. Perhaps the respect I feel for him arises from that paternal regard which he has always shewn to me ; however that be, he is the only man who has given me a just idea of the beneficent Being to whom he is the minister. He took hold of my hand, which I suffered

suffered to slide into his. You would have been affected at the sight of the good old man, softened by my sufferings, and encouraging me to endure them patiently by his heavenly discourses. For I had desired him not to forsake me. Not that I mistrust myself ; but am more serene in his company. Sometimes I am inclined to confess my weakness to him ; he might enlighten me with his advice ; his superior understanding might disperse the gloom in which I wander. Perhaps it is not yet too late to think of a retreat ; but a false delicacy prevents me from taking the seemingly eligible step ; the dread of not daring to obey his voice ; the flowery precipice down which I slide, and am pleased with the descent ; in short, the fatal aspect of my stars triumphs over the saving whispers of this gracious inspiration. An impression of tender melancholy remained on my mind all the rest of the evening. Faldoni was desired to sing ; he took a lute and accompanied it with his voice ! the air was simple, the words affecting, indeed too much so for me. I withdrew from the grove in which we were assembled, and was so exceedingly foolish as to suffer the tears to start from my eyelids. They thought me indisposed ; too truly I was so ! How my heart fluttered ! Woe to those who love ! What torture ! What anguish ! What continual distress, agitation, and alarm ! Heavens ! is there no relief ? Must that seducing phantom ever haunt my imagination ? Must my bosom ever swell with sighs ? Must my eyes still stream with tears ? Gracious God, resume thy gift, this load of life ! I am unequal to sustain it ; and must I share the burden of that unfortunate ?—I see him

him a prey to melancholy, absorbed in perplexity, sunk in despair. His looks dread to meet mine ; his voice is uttered in trembling accents. It is evident that he suffers, but dares not complain. Such is the dismal tenor of life ! Yet we must drag it heavily to the gulph where all things terminate ! For my part I cannot understand what is meant by happy people. Where are they to be found ? If the tenderest sentiment in nature only communicates pain, who can flatter themselves with exemption from misery ? Sometimes my mind is assaulted by ominous apprehensions ; till I am afraid to look around me. Corpses, tombs and doleful spectres haunt my bewildered imagination. I seem to walk among the phantoms and converse with them ; groans issue from the monuments beneath my feet ; I distinguish the voice of my lover ; he calls me, I rush into the caverns of death.—No, it is not a passion that torments me thus ; it is a delirium of love. But my greatest trouble is to conceal from him the excess of my affection. You know not what struggles I endure to gain the victory over myself. Alas ! he is too well acquainted with what I would suppress. I have unfortunately said too much, and my pen, without adding another line, is already guilty.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

DEAR Teresa, why are your charming lips so seldom softened to a smile? Did you but know how much it becomes you! Yet your melancholy is not less interesting; I could only wish that it were not the effect of grief; but the habit of your mind. How was I distressed on your account during that holiday, the remembrance of which I shall ever retain! How was I tortured by your tears! Yet I own that my pains were accompanied with a sweetnes inexpressible. I envied not the idle mirth that prevailed around me; the sentiment that I shared with you rendered me far more happy. What a powerful charm there is in grief! What a tender melancholy in love! May they often diffuse their enchantment through my bosom! May my mind be dissolved in their delicious languor!—What are all the amusements of an impertinent world in your presence! But tell me, my friend, have you experienced, like me that necessity of loving; that vague instinctive desire which pants to fix itself on a particular object; that dismal void in heart which renders pleasure insipid, and which can be filled with nothing short of love? I seemed all my life before to have been in search of you; my heart was at a loss for a companion. It was in vain to seek for it among the beauties of the day, whose every glance was to me equally indifferent. I invoked the

the favourite object of my fancy, the idea of my Teresa ; but, ah ! how long you delayed to hear my prayer. I was surprised to see the rest of mankind amused with every momentary trifle, while nothing had the power of pleasing me. At last you came ; I saw you ; and from that instant my fate was determined. How irresistibly have you taken possession of all my soul ! Could I be deprived of seeing you and breathe another hour ? It is to no purpose that I endeavoured to suppress this tormenting thought ; it pursues me incessantly, and haunts me even in your presence.

A week since you were at the ball. What a sad reverse ! To night I must be there alone.— You will not go this evening to the play.—I shall not see you. I must use myself to support absence, as in a month's time I shall lose you. The idea of the country, where you are going to bury yourself, is to me disgusting. Spring has no longer any charms for me ; and Winter is hardly more agreeable, since it admits so few occasions of my speaking to you.

I have run about all day without plan or design, by turns vexed, distracted, dejected. I was desirous of writing to you, but my head was too much disordered. I lay by my pen, and flew to the theatre ; the piece was exceedingly dull to me, and I left it. Alas ! my heart is too eager to meet the object of its desires. Impatience tyrannises over me ; and the source of my happiness becomes my torment. How often have I wished for you to-day ! I have walked under your windows, without being able to see you ; yet it was a kind of pleasure to me, to behold the insensible walls

walls that confine the sum of my affections. How transitory is pleasure ! And how dreary the solitude to which we are abandoned by her flight ! My charming friend, Teresa, how painful it is not to see each other constantly, when one wishes to be always together ! I have explored with an aching eye every spot you visited yesterday evening. I have again seen the grove, the rivulet, and the green bank which you chose for a seat.— But all this to me was naked and desert. I could not remain there, for at every step my recollection was roused to fresh torture. Surely with the possession of happiness we should lose the remembrance ! Would it not be better to forget it entirely, than to retain ideas which aggravate its loss ?

LETTER XVIII.

TERESA TO THE CURATE.

I CONJURE you, Sir, fly hither on the wings of friendship to my assistance. Save me from the dangers that surround me ; save me, if possible, from myself ! What could you think when you saw my emotions on Saturday ? Your generous consolations penetrated my heart ; you revived my dying fortitude. Most beneficent of men ! and worthy to be respected of all mankind ! it is you that I implore, and seem at the instant to address that God of goodness of whom
you

You are the image below. I dare to raise my looks towards you, and to make you acquainted with all my weakness. What an unbounded title you have to my confidence ! You who were my surety in the covenant made for me, when I entered on my career through this vale of tears ; you, whose affection has never failed me from the moment of my birth. Ah ! Sir, pity my distress ; enlighten me with your counsels ; stretch out an assisting hand to your sinking daughter ! What have I done ? What ought I to do ? Whither can I flee ? Where can I find an asylum from the woes that pursue me ? Alas ! I fear that it is too late, but, happen what will, let the secret of my foul remain concealed in your bosom ; for ever guard from the eye of suspicion and curiosity the inviolable and sacred deposit. It is true that I love, and that I love to a degree of frenzy ; it is a fever that revels in my veins ; I languish with a consuming passion ; and wonder how I have ventured to disclose it to you. In the lethargy of my reason I was unable to do it. Heaven must have been my guide ; and perhaps to-morrow I should attempt the task in vain. I even feel a strong temptation not to send this letter ; were I to re-peruse it, I were undone. But while I have strength I will proceed ; and since my ruin is determined, I shall have less to reproach myself with, after having obeyed the impulse of virtue.

You have seen, Sir, the disturber of my repose ! he is known to you ; he has lived with you ; I need not name him. Who but he could have inspired me with this tenderness ? Though I do not write to you to draw his panegyric, and extenuate

tenuate my shame ; he has ~~virtues~~ that raise esteem, and a degree of sensibility far from common. Why should I not speak this language, it is a tribute his due ? I am persuaded that he is well born, though not a favourite of fortune. He is gentle, yet feelingly alive to every delicate injury, with all that energy which attends an honest and elevated mind conscious of its own dignity. Superior to the changes of life, he is not controlled by necessity, but emboldened by the increase of obstacles. Above depression, he passes through the world with the rough frankness of independence ; thinks freely, and speaks as he thinks. How directly ought one to act towards a man so deserving of esteem ! Unguarded Teresa is but too much his slave ; and were I my own mistress, the gift of my hand should soon follow that of my heart. But my father would never consent to the union ; this I know, and foresee all the consequences. Why should I cherish a forlorn hope ? Nay, more, my family has other objects in view for me ; perhaps at this instant I am on the point of becoming their victim ! Begone, then, too flattering illusion which I suffered to charm my imagination ! False image of mutual happiness ! I have indulged you too long ; and now bid adieu to you for ever. Yet I will venture to ask you one favour ; it is to impart the balm of consolation to the innocent but unhappy author of my sufferings. Desire him to remove from hence ; but do not tell him it is my wish he should do so ; that intimation would kill him with despair. Let it appear to be advice entirely your own, suggested by the reports that begin to circulate in whispers. Conceal from him my father's

father's intention of marrying me ; were he to know it, his love, I fear, would betray him to some fatal excess. You may add, that I will never forget him ; that I will retain for him all allowable sentiments ; that I conjure him by our past friendship to arm himself with fortitude on this occasion ; and that his endeavours to secure his own tranquillity will restore mine. If, sometime hence, his seeing me will not be attended with too much difficulty, we will have an interview. Alas ! my heart, will not those precious stolen moments, be distressing to both ?—Perhaps one day we may be happier ; but, he must not depend upon any thing ; and all that remains for us, is to prevent the gathering storm by a seasonable, though painful, separation. Heavens ! what a sacrifice ! dreadful indeed, and, I fear, beyond my resolution. To renounce the dearest idea of my soul ! To doom myself to an everlasting oblivion of the object I love ! To breathe far from him, whose image will follow me to the tomb !—I open my mind to you without reserve ; you see my wounds ; are they not mortal ? Can there be a cure ? Plunged in despair, I wait for death, as the only remedy for my sufferings. I pity the partner of my woes : what will become him ? Would to God ! that you may relieve him, that your piety may encourage him to sustain the misfortunes which are the lot of virtue. Indeed the thought of what he must endure is too much for me, and I expect from you, Sir, the assistance which I so much need. His removal is indispensable for my peace ; yet, were he to flee to the end of the earth, my heart and soul would go with him. But the die is cast, and I must submit.

mit. When hopes of seeing him are denied me, I shall be better able to combat my passion for him : if, indeed, the image of the dear tyrant will then leave me to repose.

LETTER XIX.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

MY father is just arrived ; trouble and desolation in his train. He talks of marrying me : and yesterday ordered me to be called, that I might be acquainted with his pleasure. On announcing his intention, I told him, with a dejected countenance, that his will should determine mine. He fancied there was some hesitation in my answer, and asked me what objections I had to propose. I looked at my mother, who took up the discourse, and said, it would be proper to wait a little before that resolution was adopted ; that I was very young ; that I ought to be acquainted with the person intended for me ; yet, that she made these remarks in perfect acquiescence with their being slighted or regarded. I flatter myself replied my father, that Teresa is disposed to obey me ; and that she can trust me for the choice of a husband. You may depend that I will not force her inclination ; but, supposing that her heart is as free as it ought to be, surely I may be allowed to guide it in the most important step to be taken in life ? I said, with a sigh, if I may venture to answer

answer you, Sir, I feel no wish to be married ; my utmost happiness would be still to live with you. Were your mother and I immortal, he replied gravely, I should approve of your sentiments ; but, as we, like you, have been young, so now we grow old ; and the time will come when we must rejoin our ancestors. How dreadful it is, for a girl to be left alone in the world ! Think well of that, Miss. I would wish to believe that your regard for us has dictated your speech, and that no foreign partiality has given birth to your refusal. However, I shall allow you time to make up your mind on this subject ; six months, if you please—but that period elapsed, give me a final answer ; that will regulate my opinion. Far be it from me to enter into a dispute with you, when your happiness is depending ! But my age and experience have furnished me with a degree of penetration, which cannot be expected from you. I must be better acquainted than any other person with what suits you ; and after mature reflection on the match I propose, it appears to me most advisable, and every way likely to promote your happiness. Yet, as you are undecided, I will press the subject no farther at present ; though if you continue to thwart me with chimerical objections, tremble for the future. We cannot always be with you ; it is the decree of fate that a separation must, ere long, take place between us, when we shall enter our everlasting mansion. O Sir, (I cried, elevating my hands) what a terrible picture you delineate ! Why do you mention the day when I must leave you ?—Daughter, such is the law of nature ; therefore, obey your father, who can only wish your good. See, your affectionate

tionate mother is dissolved in tears ; her judgment corresponds with mine. Have you any private reasons to oppose my choice ? Come, confide them to my paternal bosom !—So saying, he drew me toward him, and took me in his arms. Ah ! Constantia, what was then the situation of your poor friend ! My heart flew to my lips ; I was on the point of speaking, but a groan prevented me. I bathed the face of my father with a torrent of tears. O eloquent voice of nature ! O inexpressible charm of filial affection ! What shame I felt for the struggle of contending passions ! My mamma, who witnessed the scene, threw her arms round her husband's neck, and we mingled the stream of tenderness. My best friend, said she, after a moment's silence, I think Teresa ought to be consulted on the present occasion. The fatal consequences of too many marriages proceed entirely from the want of sympathy between those who are united. It is commonly thought that when rank and fortune are suitable, every inconvenience is banished ; but this is a mistake. At the same time that the pair are guarded against the necessities of life, care should be taken to secure them, likewise, against evils equally intollerable, tempers never meant to associate, disgust, and too often aversion. Happiness does not consist in a mass of riches ; mediocrity will suit my daughter better, and she will always have it in her power to enjoy that. The support of her name she may leave to her brother, who has already shewn himself not unworthy of his noble ancestors, and who will take care to preserve the honour of his family. Let, therefore, the days of my dear Teresa serenely slide away in the

the shades of private life. Then, taking my hand, which I held up to my eyes, no more! said she, away with these tears; embrace your father, and compose yourself; we will talk on this subject another time. Madam, said Mr. de Saint Cyran, my daughter will think of it, it is her busineſs. For my part, my plan is laid, and I will not alter it. So ſaying, he arose hafhly from his chair, without permitting me to embrace him, and went out, my mamma followed him and I returned to my chamber, ſufficiently dispirited, as you may imagine. To complete my misfortunes, Faldoni came to pay us a visit in the afternoon. It was remarked that my eyes appeared heavy; for, the truth is, I had wept plentifully. Faldoni ſeemed uneasy; his face frequently changed colour; and my father, who does not like, looked ſtedfastly at him. I never ſaw ſuch piercing eyes; as I met their glances, they often made me tremble. What a wretched constraint, my dear friend! How painful to be always on one's guard! When the heart is ſo much agitated, muſt not ſome emotion be betrayed by the countenance? I fancied a hundred times that our diſguife was ſeen through by my father. His cloudy looks were darted at us from the gloomy shade of his eyebrows, in a manner quite tremendous. I ſuffered all the tor-tures of the rack. Is it credible that I ſhould be diſtressed by the preſence of him I love, and delighted at his removal? However, this was the caſe. I have been left at peace ſince then; the fatal converſation has not been renewed; yet, I am not the leſs concerned on that account. Ah! Conſtantia, my bliſſful days are at an end. I muſt bid adieu to happiness, to love, to hope, to all

all the sweetness of life. I must part with every thing.

P. S. I took a false alarm; my father suspects nothing; his ill-humour was the consequence of our discourse in the morning; this I learn from my mother. The self-arraignment of a guilty heart! that fancies all eyes intent on it, and apprehends condemnation from every quarter.

LETTER XX.

THE CURATE TO TERESA.

HOW affected am I with your confessions! To triumph over ourselves by the exertions of fortitude and renounce the sweetest error of the heart, claims the palm of virtue. Shall I speak ingenuously? I have long suspected the secret which you have confided to me; but, the stability of your principles was too well known, for me to entertain the least doubt of your prudence. I was well persuaded that my dear daughter would not venture to take a step without the approbation of the strictest honour. Courage! therefore; for I perceive nothing but a misfortune too frequently inevitable, and against which, reason itself is ill-provided with arms. Perhaps you are surprised at this language from an old man and a priest, whose years and office set him above the tyranny

tyranny of the passions ; but I am a stranger to that affected sanctity, which, with a savage sternness repulses the ingenuous overflowing of a too sensible and timorous heart. I am a man, with all the infirmities of my nature. I have experienced the dreadful effects of those inward tempests which dethrone our reason, and set at naught the boasted precepts of philosophy. I have seen that the scaffolding of morality, supposed a shelter from the assaults of natural emotions, is shattered by the least blast ; and that we are destroyed by the arms provided for our defence. I have endured the fever which torments you (for I will make my confessions also, and repay your confidence with mine) and, perhaps, am indebted to the infirmities of age for the little virtue that I retain. How can we know ourselves, if we have never engaged the enemy ; The soul is purified by trials. Without this alarming shock, would you have guessed your own strength ? That has manifested it ; that has proved we are capable, by the assistance of reason and resolution, of the sublimest efforts. Dear child, what tears has your letter drawn from my eyes ! How have I sympathised with you in your sufferings ! At your entrance into the world, surrounded with the most flattering hopes, in the bloom of beauty, to be seized by the violent hand of affliction, and thrown at distance from the flowery path that nature seems to have allotted for youth to rove in ! To have the glooms of grief and distress extended before you ! To walk between two precipices, without a guide to conduct you, without a cheering ray to enlighten you ! What must have become of you, had not the Supreme Being, whose

watchful eye pervades all nature, declared himself your protector ? Thanks be to that good God ! things are not yet desperate. Do not give your self up for lost ; Providence, from the depth of woe often calls up consolation. Why should you, then, renounce that happiness which it is probable attends you ? Time brings surprising vicissitudes ; nature is never at a stay. Survey the rapid succession of different events, which has devolved with the tide of time. It is the picture of man ; the condition of his nature is, never to continue the same. Every object changes ; every situation is altered ; to-day, things go ill ; to-morrow, they mend ; in the triumph of fortune a reverse is to be apprehended ; as, in pain, it is natural to hope for pleasure. This way of reasoning has been my constant support through life. When I have been unhappy, I have said to my soul, suffer with resignation, things are at the worst ; if they alter, it must be for the better. Prosperity has, at length, revived me with her smiles, and obliterated the memory of past sufferings.

I resume now, dear daughter, the subject of your letter. As soon as it was delivered to me, I went to look for your friend ; I invited him, by a note, to call on me ; and he came two hours afterward. I talked to him a great while about indifferent things, and slipped out some words relative to the entertainment on Saturday, our walks, and our conversations. I observed he changed colour, and sighed ; he cast his eyes toward the ground, and continued a long time without uttering a syllable. Then, suddenly recovering himself.—What's the matter, Sir ! said he ; what would you inform me of ? Do not keep me in suspense. I will not, said I, with

with an air of seriousness ; and it is for that reason I desire your attention. You must have seen my friendship for the family of the Count de Saint Cyran, and especially for his daughter, whom I have known from her birth ; whom I have carefully educated ; and, who honours me with her esteem. Zealous as I am for the welfare of the young lady you may well suppose me uneasy on account of the reports spread, respecting your marked attentions to her. I have, therefore, thought proper to give you this warning, and to advise you to moderate them. It seemed to me that this language might sound less severe from my mouth, than from that of a father, jealous of the reputation of his daughter, and incapable of forgiving the least attempt to sully it. I am farther authorized to open this explanation, by my office as a minister of peace and reconciliation ; by the absolute confidence reposed in me by that family ; and I may venture to add, by the interest I take in your happiness. Tell me, Sir, whether I offend you by this frankness ? I fear, indeed, that it mortifies you ; but it is a necessary severity, which I am sure your good sense will forgive.

I thank you, said he, both for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your sparing the father the trouble of this explanation ; though, for my part, I fear an explanation with no man.— You have not offended me ; I honour your office and you ; and, if you have mortified me, it is not in the sense you meant. But, who told you, Sir, that I had shewn marked attentions to Miss de Saint Cyran ? Are customary civilities, attentions ; and, do you charge me with them as a crime ? Cannot one distinguish a lady, without being smitten with her ? Or, is paying her the homage

due to her merit, in the face of the world, wounding her reputation? But, it is granted that the public is ill-disposed, suspicious, and curious; it presumes to penetrate halfway, and guesses the rest; the more exalted the virtue of the object which employs its speculation, the greater is the triumph of envy in wounding it with calumny.—Heavens! absence itself cannot secure us; your enemies, (and every body has some), will misconstrue your silence, and assert that your removal proves your guilt. But, who are they that complain?—It is of small consequence to know them, I answered; lay your hand on your heart, and say, have they not spoken the truth?

I am not now before my judge, answered he; I acknowledge no tribunal but that of honour, and that tribunal is seated here; (striking his bosom) while I am not condemned by that, mankind has nothing to reproach me with, nor have I an apology to make to them.

I replied with a degree of warmth, Did you know my heart, you would be less irritable. My design is not to pain, but to serve you; nay, to serve you against your own consent. You are rushing to destruction; you cannot long continue as you are. Your heart betrays itself every moment; it exposes both you, and the object of its affection. Miss de St. Cyran is so universally esteemed and respected, that what is said at present about her, circulates in whispers; but common fame is not long to be bribed to moderation. In short, if you take my advice, you will forbear your visits, and prudently withdraw yourself for a season.

At

At these words he seemed struck with terror. Withdraw myself! See her no more! What do you say? Good God! Then recovering himself, and appearing ashamed of being surprised off his guard, he said, with affected serenity, since you are honoured with the confidence of Miss de St. Cyran, I suppose, Sir, you are to be considered as her ambassador, and doubtless it is by the lady's order that you have declared her will in this cruel sentence. Well! I will obey it. Yes, Sir, since it must be so, I will no more approach a house where, I must confess, some moments of pleasure have been my share—dearly enough purchased! (striking his forehead with his hand) Dire necessity!—Forgive this transport! I forgot that I was in your presence (wiping the tears that flowed from his eyes). He then attempted to go out, but I withheld him. Unhappy man! Whither do you flee! Stay here, and receive from me all the consolation in my power. I am not hard-hearted, but feel an affection for one who has warmly interested me in his behalf. I would fain procure your happiness; I would fain do it; but, alas! what obstacles! Yet, take courage; compose yourself; but, by no means appear before the beloved object; it is essentially necessary that you avoid her. You must.

I was going to add much more; but, my daughter, he gave a shriek, and fell at my feet. On recovering, he flew to my arms.—Ah! my father! my dear father! Is it you who speak to me? Can it be so? May I hope?—But what have I dared to confess to you?—Indiscreet! I have betrayed myself!—Fear nothing! I answered; your secret is sacred; pay me another visit, and

and I will consider what you must do. I know your soul is honest. Had you been a seducer, our intercourse would have ceased. But, your sentiments are virtuous, and you deserve to be happy. I embraced him with tears, and we parted.

LETTER XXI.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

I HAVE just been to see Miss De St. Cyran, who appeared pensive and melancholy. On my attempt to enter into conversation with her, she withdrew; and did not condescend to bless me with one glance. I now call to mind several circumstances that fell out previous to this visit, and which might have given me a foresight of my reception. What is the grievance, Sir? What have I done? How am I criminal? I will not attempt to describe the effect I sustained from her coldness; with indignation and despair of heart I rushed from the presence of the fair one. Alas! I may be in the wrong; but, it is not allowed me to make a defence! Yet, the more I reflect, I am convinced that I ought to have my sentence confirmed beyond a doubt, before I acquiesce in it. Dear Sir, have the goodness to persuade her to grant me an explanation. Are criminals punished without being informed of their offence? —This is a favour I expect from you, as the Minister

Minister of the God of Love ; it is by clemency that you imitate the Divine nature. Indeed I blush when I picture to myself a venerable pastor, who, assailed by the complaints of a frantic youth, bears with the infirmity of an earthly passion, condescends to listen to his amorous distress, and sacrifices in his behalf those precious moments, which certainly would be employed to infinitely more advantage in the discharge of the rigid duties enjoined by the holy voice of Heaven-breathing religion. Yet, why would you deny me assistance ? Are you not the physician of souls ? Your eloquence pours the balm of comfort into the hearts of the wretched ; you snatch from despair all who have the happiness to hear the soul-transporting accents of your tongue. I know it is said, excessive lenity is a vice. So let it be, with those cold and rigid mortals whose laws are all engraven on brass, and who never step an inch beyond the narrow limits of their principles. With them, pity is a weakness ; and severity assumes the title of justice. Woe ! to the follower of virtue, who fancies she is fully pleased with him who barely acquits himself of his own local duties ! Virtue, sublime name ! is she not superior to all human compact, and the petty laws of society ? Before the world, she was ; before virtuous men existed, she reposed on the bosom of her heavenly Parent ; her emanations descend from heaven to earth ; he who sincerely worships her, does not wait for the law to tell him, you must do so ; at the sight of virtue, he flies to meet her ; he embraces her, ere the legislator has spoken. O you who have a soul, receive me to your paternal bosom ; let me there deposit the burden of my afflictions ! Yet, how

how will your generous nature sustain it ? I sink under the weight. Nor strength, nor fortitude, nor faculties remain ; all is annihilated.

I will endeavour to see you some time to-day. I have been continually walking since the morning ; as if fatigue were likely to relieve me from the disagreeable thoughts that distract my imagination ! Alas ! to run, to fly, is a vain stratagem ; go where I will, this heart, this poor sickly heart, will be my companion !

LETTER XXII.

THE CURATE TO FALDONI.

COME this evening ; I will wait at home for you. We will take a walk together in the woods ; rural air is balsamic to a wounded mind. You are dexterous at aggravating your misfortunes ; and the tyranny of fancy precipitates you with wonderful zeal into a sea of difficulties. What ! because reason dictates the propriety of a short absence, all is lost, and the very glimmerings of hope expire ! Your brain is disordered ; your blood inflamed ; chimeras haunt your distracted imagination, and you are incurably wretched.— What would become of you, were these evils real ; were you obliged to renounce the object of your desires ; were you condemned to forego ever seeing her again ? Your letter to me has the air of coming

coming from a child, who knows not what it asks for. You desire that Miss de St. Cyran should confirm, with her mouth, your sentence, as you are pleased to call it. What I told you is quite lost ; and it seems that your memory has not escaped the shipwreck of your reason. Wherefore do you complain ? Who pretends to say that you are in the wrong ! What ! to recommend reserve, prudence and management, is to call you criminal ? You say that you have not been favoured with a glance from your charmer. From discreet caution she has preserved a rigorous constraint in your presence ; and you are seized with madness ! You are forward to condemn her. Lovers are an odd sort of people ! Was it merely to distress you, that, in the tone of friendship, I solicited your absence ? Have you entertained such a suspicion ? Dare to avow it, and I will never see you more. How could I take a cruel pleasure in tormenting you, when, forsaking the dignity of my character and function, I have even confessed a tender sympathy with you in your amorous weaknesses ? You have put a very wrong construction on the purport of a prayer, which, having no object but that which is ingenuously expressed, will not be repeated by Miss de St. Cyran, if you despise it. She leaves it to the integrity of your heart, to determine on a removal, which, to me, appears indispensable, but which by no means implies your disgrace.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

THE CURATE TO TERESA.

YOUR friend, by appointment, called on me yesterday at five o'clock. We walked out immediately, taking the way to the fields. It was a delightful evening; and, as we proceeded leisurely in deep silence, chance led us to a steep hill, from whence part of the town lay in open prospect. Here we were allured to make a pause. enamoured with the beauties of the scene. The Soane flowed beneath us through a majestic plain, and visited with its streams the elegant chain of buildings on which the eye dwells with an enchanting pleasure. I have often had occasion to observe, my dear daughter, that the charms of nature communicate a secret calm to the soul, and compose the stormy voice of the passions. Mr. Faldoni stood motionless, gazing with fixed attention on that quarter of the town which remotely presented itself to his view; and fancying that he could perceive the appearance of your house, he wept at the discovery. To-morrow, said he to me, at this hour, I shall be far enough from that! He arose, and continued. Let us leave this spot, the prospect is too disengaging for me; my resolution gives way. We removed a few steps, when he suddenly turned about, and pointing toward the fatal building, O God! he cried, grant me strength to tear myself from that dangerous neighbourhood! But, why must I flee? Too cruel man, why do you oblige me to withdraw?

He

He then sat down on the grass. Yes, 'tis resolv-ed, I will not forsake this ground ? here let me die ! (said he, his voice rendered hardly intelligible by rising sobs) yes, let me be interred beneath the shade of this tree ; and should she visit the spot, let her know that I fell a victim to her cruelty. I suffered him to indulge his melancholy effusions a good while without interruption ; and when his heart seemed something lighter for having deposited its burden, I began to remind him of what I had said before in conversation, and writing. I pointed out the hopes of better days ; encouraging him to endure his present sufferings by every motive of honour, reason, and love. I brought him to confess that his complaints were unjust ; that nothing was proposed but very warrantable precaution ; and, that it was absurd not to submit to necessity. He listened to me, with his arms cross-wise and his head inclining to his bosom, in a melancholy attitude. Well ! said he at last, you command, and I obey ; I promise not to enter the town again till I am permitted to return. Adieu ! Sir, (folding me in his arms, with profound sighs) adieu ! my benefactor and my friend ! Remember me ! Suffer me to write to you, and deign to favour me with an answer ; deign sometimes to mention to Faldoni, her for whom he does more than lay down his life, I know not whither to go ; having no object to pursue in this dismal journey, all places are to me the same. What days of bitterness must I endure ! How different from those when I enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing her ; when I breathed the air of felicity in her pre-sence ! You know not that, in resigning Teresa, I lose

I lose an angel. He repeated with peculiar emphasis, she is an angel descended to earth to bless mankind. Adieu ! Daughter of the Skies ! thou whom I loved ; though hopeless whom I still love, though lost ; and whom I love to the last pulse of my life. Should my complaints reach you, allow me but a tear, and I die contented !—You will see her, Sir ; tell the charming maid that I will never cease to adore her. My condition is open to you ; you are witness to my anguish ; I do not conceal it from you ; Heaven and earth knows it ; I may groan, at least, that is a comfort which cannot be denied me, though I am deprived of every other.—Yes, of every other ! Have I even an asylum remaining ? Am I not driven from it ? What could be done worse, were I the object of her hatred ?

When I found him relapsing into his first apprehensions, and disposed to reject my counsels, I assumed a different tone. I thought, said I to him, that I had to do with a man of sense ! But, since nothing can moderate your wild and impetuous humour, you must be left to the consequence ; I protest to you, therefore, that I will no longer concern myself with your affairs, and that I speak to you now for the last time. I then feigned to leave him ; but he stopped in a tremor. What would you do ? Do you not perceive that I am a wretch whose sufferings have dethroned his reason ? Is a patient forsaken, because he has the misfortune to labour under a delirium ? In pity, do not abandon me ! I am ready to submit to anything. You insist on my retiring ; well, once more, adieu ! He again flew instinctively to my arms.—Then suddenly bursting from them. Write to me ;

me, I beseech you ! That is your road, and this is mine ; here we part. He descended the hill precipitately, till I lost sight of him.

LETTER XXIV.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

I HAVE obliged him to remove from me ; he is now far enough off, and has left me to my tears. Ah ! my friend, where is he now, who filled the vacuity of my moments, who was the charming engrosser of my thoughts ? He was every thing to me ; more than life, something more than happiness itself. The sight of him inspired me with heavenly rapture ; everlasting transports dwelt on his smile.—But, he is gone !—Though deeply fixed in my wounded heart his image still remains. There it remains for my punishment, and never will leave me at rest, till I meet the great deliverer, death ! I despair of serenity on this side the grave ! My imagination fondly revell'd in joys, in felicities, in loves. Poor Teresa ! weak, mistaken girl ! you did not know, you did not perceive, that you must derive all those blessings from Faldoni alone. When I recollect the emotion that seized me at his appearance ; my concern at the bare expectation of his coming back ; the palpitation of my heart at the sound of his steps, at the tone of his voice, at every thing, in short, which gave notice of his approach ;

proach ; I wonder how I could resolve to banish him ; how I could think of living a moment without the sight of him.— Ah ! Constantia, why did you induce me to read the letters of Julia Mandeville ? Why sadden with the gloom of an imaginary wretch, a soul already bleeding with its private anguish ? Yes, I have read the book ; I have bathed its pages with tears that flowed from the full fountain of my heart. Alas ! Julia had her consolations ; I have none. She loved without restraint ; while I am obliged to conceal my passion from every thing in nature. I must smile, when I need to weep ; I must lie silent, while my heart is breaking.— Gracious God ! to feel one's self dying, and not dare to say, I die !

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

MY father has presented to me the man whom he intends for my husband ; death from his hand would have been more welcome. Before this, antipathy was a word not understood by me ; I thank this strange personage for giving me an idea of it. Imagine, my dear Constantia, you see a tall withered spectre, of a dark jaundiced complexion, who addressed me with a tone of importance in sepulchral accents, examined me with his hollow, vicious eyes, and smiled horribly, stretching his mouth to his ears. Such was the figure

figure that I discovered at the first glance. You will ask me whether he possesses merit, wit, and manners. I answer you, that he has two million. He has just returned from the Indies, having amassed that prodigious fortune in those climates. Would to God ! he might go back again ! I understand that he abandoned his parents here to poverty ; and this has rendered the disagreeable creature my abhorrence. I was provoked at him for looking down on me as his conquest, and in consequence, daring to take my hand and kiss it : I withdrew it in haste ; and my colour must have shewn him my aversion. He is going on a journey, for six months. Six months, dear cousin, is the term fixed for poor Teresa's marriage ! Was it then, for the sake of this fatal union that I banished my Faldoni, and deprived myself of the satisfaction of seeing him ? Alas ! he went away pensively, without friend, without guide, without comfort, forlorn, alone, on foot, in the gloom of the evening ; and, while he traversed deserts in obedience to me, I watered my couch with tears ; I regretted him ; I called on him ; I cursed my severity—severity do I say ? cruelty, tyranny. Dear Constantia, how painful are my efforts ! to effect the frost of indifference ! to suppress the whisper of a sigh ! to deny my eyes the pleasure of looking at him !—Yes, let pride be condemned by the voice of mankind ! They are right ; pride is the tyrant of nature. I would retreat to a cottage and conceal myself beneath the humble veil of poverty, to escape from the persecutions that surround me. My father has threatened to confine me within the walls of a nunnery, which would most certainly afford me

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the only suitable asylum. In reality, should I give the preference to an unequal union? I know not whether my ideas are just; but must own that those I entertain of the marriage state, are most sublime. I consider it as the supreme degree of human felicity, founded on virtue, esteem, and tenderness. Without these qualifications no condition appears more dreadful to me, than that of being condemned to live with a man one despises, or whom one cannot love. On the contrary, in the single state, or under the sanction of a religious life, the laws that bind us are of our own chusing; when our daily task of mortifications, or labours is performed, (and what condition is free from them?) we may live at peace with ourselves, and recover in our own hearts the shadow of liberty, since the reality is no where. These have often been my reflections, and I always renew them with delight. The present crisis of my affairs cannot possibly continue; there must be a revolution. Every thing is against me, men, opinions, and fortune; and I have only the integrity of my heart to shield me from so many enemies! What would you have me to do? I feel myself able to face them all: but, a father! Oh, my friend, what a terrible adversary! Let him but speak, I am humbled to the dust, I see that I am nothing. Heaven, earth, my lover, universal nature vanishes; and my refuge is obedience.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

IT is, then, certain that I have lost her ; that she has driven me from her ; that she renounces me !—O divine sentiment of never-dying affection, what is become of you ? My visionary happiness is at an end ; and nothing remains to me but a forlorn remembrance of it ! How is she engaged ? Does she feel, at least, some compunction for the sufferings I sustain through her ? Or am I entirely effaced from her mind ? Alas ! if she be happy, what are my sufferings ? Yet, let her know what I write to you ; paint to her my condition ; at least it deserves her pity. How tediously I drag my dreary days ! Surely it is ten years since I left you ! My eyes are incessantly turned toward the spot from which I am banished ; not the desert can secure me from disagreeable reflections. I see no being around me without a companion ; but I am a forlorn individual ! I stand alone in the universe ! No one belongs to me ; no one shares my fortunes ; no one cares for my life ; no one participates my hopes and fears ! Were I immediately to quit this transitory scene, my grave would be closed without a tear. Dreadful dereliction ! Insupportable idea ! It withers every bloom, and leaves a tremendous waste behind it.

Yet, I could rest contented with my habitation ; were it in my power to be so with any thing. I feel,

I feel that solitude is good for me; in the pure atmosphere of these verdant fields, I breathe a salubrious air that softens the impetuosity of my blood. There is a charming park in the neighbourhood; in which I take a turn every day. When I wish for a prospect of diversified nature, in the pleasing interchange of hill and plain, I ascend a neighbouring rock, where venerable oaks extend an asylum, and grateful zephyrs, sporting in the friendly shade, alleviate the blazing tyranny of noon. I frequently pay a visit to an abbey at a small distance, that rises from the bosom of four or five pleasant vallies. Bushes appear scattered here and there on the hillocks gilded with the blossom of broom; while the lowing of the cows at pasture in the neighbourhood, and the sound of the bell from the monastery, diffuse through the whole landscape, a softened air of religious melancholy. I hear from afar the artless strains of the peasants, who sing while they cut the herbs or roots for their evening banquet. Their soft plaintive voices thrill with an inexpressible charm to my very soul. The sun sets behind the castle of Ormes, which appears full in sight; and I feast on this delightful prospect till night arrives with her shadowy train. Then I regain my cot; and the good people who have granted me an asylum, welcome me home with an honest joy that wins the heart. I share their frugal repast; amuse myself with the picture of this virtuous family; the father, the wife, the children, are all the image of simplicity. How fond they are of each other! How merry when they return from the labours of the day! It is, then, certain that there are happy beings on earth.

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This thought affords me consolation. Why do not mankind, therefore, embrace that happiness which they may so easily obtain?—Justina, my landlady, was vexed yesterday, and she has given me this account of the occasion. Her god-daughter Jenny is beloved by Mathurin, whose father is a miser, he will not consent to his son's marriage with Jenny, because she is not rich enough; had she but a couple of cows, their fortunes would be equal, and she might depend on the hand of her lover. But these two cows are worth a great deal of money, and, says Justina, we cannot afford to give them to her; this renders the lovers unhappy; so that they spend their days in weeping. I promised to supply the two cows, when the honest folks almost stifled me with their caresses.—They have introduced me to the young couple, with whom I am really enchanted. What an afflicting contrast between their situation and my own! Ah; Sir, since I have lost the hope of being happy myself, I can taste no bliss but that of others. But are not you surprised at the tyranny of the base passions, which disturb even those poor villagers? That, in the midst of fields where riches flow from the nervous arm of the husbandman, where two wretches support and comfort each other by sharing their misery, even through the rags of indigence, a system of inequality pervades, offensive to nature, that rouses indignation, makes the blood boil in the veins, and tempts the soul to curse that proud race of worms who think themselves beings privileged beyond the rest of their species, because they are exalted a few inches higher.—What! has not God formed them of the same clay as me? Will our ashes be distinguished in the bowels of

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the earth to which we must return ; or will the worms that are to banquet on my body, respect theirs ? How cruel are they who oppose the felicity of two lovers, which, at the best, must be so short-lived ! What are twenty or thirty years to be spent in this world ; and, why amass riches as if immortal ? It is a shocking folly to be afraid that the earth should fail us. It furnishes the birds of Heaven with food, and yet they do not sow ! Venerable Providence ! Supreme Being, whose sceptre rules the spheres ! It is a sin against thy goodness inquisitively and audaciously to anticipate the future. Dost thou not load the trees with fruit, yet we dare to be solicitous ! Yes, the more I reflect on civil life, the more sensible I am of nature's works being degraded by man's institutions. Were society well ordered, every individual would be in his place ; and there would be hopes of my possessing her I love ; the gift of her hand would be the reward of my affection ; and while I am writing, my tears would not bedew the paper. Would you, Sir, who express some interest in my welfare, would you, in that case, have banished me from the spot that holds my life ? Should I be a fugitive among woods and rocks ; dragging the load of existence in all the agony of fear ; uncertain of my destiny ; and at a loss to know whether I am not to be deprived of my charmer ? Fair idol of human wishes, Felicity, art thou always to be out of reach, though ever in view of thy votaries ?

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE just enjoyed a moment of happiness ! I am come from the castle of Ormes ; what angel inspired me with an inclination to go thither, I know not ; but the moment that design entered my head, there seemed to be a curtain drawn from before me, and nature displayed in all her charms. What a beautiful day ! I set out this morning before Aurora streaked the skies ; the path flew beneath my feet as I approached the towers of this blessed edifice, and they lengthened before me ; I breathed with difficulty ; and my eyes lost the surrounding objects in a cloud. A shepherd, whom I saw leading his flock to a neighbouring meadow, very much interested me ; every thing was enchanting, even the trees in the vista, the rivulet that glides through the field, and every corner of the delightful land. In piercing the allies of lofty elms that lead to the castle, I fancied myself transported to the Elysian shades ; my eyes were employed in looking about me with insatiable curiosity. When I came to the keeper's, his little residence charmed me ; I was delighted with the windows overrun with ivy ; the rustic turret raised in the front ; that air of mirth and rural freedom which prevailed in his family : and, on my intimating a wish to see the inside of the rooms, the good man readily offered to be my guide.— Shall I describe to you what were my sensations

on viewing this ancient and venerable edifice, when I had crossed the threshold of the door? The deep solitude; the wind whistling through the aisles and galleries; the gloominess of the chambers, which for the most part had their shutters close; that dreariness which every where prevailed thrilled me with inexpressible horror.— At the same instant I fancied Teresa lay dead before me, and the forlorn pile seemed to be her sepulchre. This idea so engrossed my imagination, so closely haunted me, that I was obliged to walk out, that I might get the better of it. In the open air I recovered my reason, but on re-entering the chapel, the same fancy returned with redoubled energy, and an universal coldness shot through my veins. The good old man seeming to sympathise with me, I re-collected my fortitude, and dragged my legs as well as I was able up the steps of the castle. My heart was in a flutter on reflecting that I was about to enter the apartments of Miss de St. Cyran; though it had not been mention to me, I should have known it from the emotion felt within me at its sight. I seemed to be entering a temple, and was ready to do it with the act of prosteration. What a delightful asylum! Curtains of white silk, drawn, up with rose coloured ribands, hung down in festoons about an elegant bed, inclosed in a kind of alcove; and on a small table lay some books, such as Clarissa, Grandison, Racine, Dehouliere, and the English Spectator. I found on her bureau an inkstand, with some paper; a drawer was half open; a chair stood near, turned aside, and looked as if Teresa had just left it. Indeed she seemed present to me; for

for the very furniture, in this disorder appeared alive. The keeper gave me leave to take a turn or two in the park ; this morning I began my ramble over it, and being alone, amused myself with engraving verses from Petrarch, on the trees. Perhaps one day, when she visits this wood, her eyes will discover these pathetic expressions of my love, and the memory of my will be revived in her bosom. How delighted was I with musing along the canal bordered with jonquils and shaded with tufts of lilac ; on the terrace from whence I viewed the whole circle of the horizon ; and in the glades of ancient limetrees which at the end of the parterre, form a retreat impervious to the sun ! Teresa must make this her favourite haunt ; it breathes a certain calm, a serenity, a sentiment of pleasure, an inexpressible languor which I would call tenderness ; and is too bewitching for me to forsake it. To-morrow I will take up my residence there, with books, a pencil, and paper ; I will amuse myself in reading, drawing, writing, walking ; at noon I will dine with the keeper ; and return to my hermitage in the evening.

How powerful, my friend, is the magic of the passions ! They embellish every thing, where they reign. To the sight of an enraptured lover, creation assumes a new face ; he is conveyed to unknown shores, in other climates ; the gardens and palace of Alcinous receive him in their beauteous bosom ; he no longer sees objects in the same light as the rest of mankind ; his feelings are exalted beyond those of his species ; he finds enchantment in a tree, a flower, or a rivulet.— Alas ! I pity his frozen soul who is a stranger to the generous glow of the passions ; to him life has lost its sovereign charm.

LETTER XXVIII.

THE CURATE TO FALDONI.

YOUR absence has already produced a good effect; inquiry has been made at Monsieur de St. Cyran's, I believe by myself, why you have discontinued your visits? My answer was, that you were in the country; when Madam de St. Cyran, who takes every occasion to praise you, spoke your encomium so heartily, that she quite charmed me. Go on, my friend; be always what you are at present; let neither modern manners nor the custom of the world warp that integrity which is the basis of virtue! Yet I must chide you for your visit to the castle of Ormes, and the residence which you wish to make there. Does not prudence dictate the choice of another habitation, and other recesses to walk in? You cannot too carefully avoid every indiscretion of that nature. I commend the strictness of your moral sentiments, and your opinion of the inequality of rank among mankind. But, my dear son, all these fine reasonings will not correct the world; and the truths you utter will not persuade any to descend from the ladder on which he is mounted. Though, in reality, I esteem no more than you the people who are proud of the advantages they derive from birth and fortune, yet, I go with the stream, and bow my head to him whom chance has placed above me. Moralizing may afford us consolation; but to change the established custom

tom of things is impossible ! Enjoy the beauties of rural life ; raise your soul to the supreme Being ; think in peaceful solitude on the crowd of wretches who languish in chains, or on a bed of agonizing sickness ; how many would envy your lot, and wish, like you, to have the privileges of beholding the glory of the rising sun ; and yet you dare to murmur, who have only to look around you for ample occasion of content ! Where lie your pains ? What is your distemper ? What fetters confine you ? You possess all the freedom, health, and riches that nature can bestow ; and above all, ability to enjoy them. But shocking prejudices impose their iron yoke on your neck ; haughty mortals raise a wall of separation between you and your mistress ! Well, my friend, this is an unhappiness created by an inclination which would tyrannise beyond the bounds of reason. God forbid ! that I should say there is no hope of success for your affection. I have given you my promise to dispose the heart of a mother in your favour ; and time, accident, and your own behaviour may second my efforts ; but examine yourself, and tell me whether the extravagance of your wishes at this very instant is not the only source of your distress : when considering how far you are from having obtained your object, ought you not to be prepared for misfortunes, that they may not overset you, should they arrive ? There is a certain softness that attends melancholy reflections ; for susceptible hearts there is a secret charm in sorrow ; it is your duty, if I may be allowed the expression, to render as comfortable as possible your bed of thorns. A Sibarite, reclined on roses, dares

complain. Why will you not adopt that way of thinking, which, let fortune smile or frown, will be most salutary ? Under affliction, thank Heaven that it is so supportable ; and bear in memory the blessings that preceded it. Would it not be ungrateful, after a fine day, to accuse nature of cruelty because the shades of night fall in succession ? We must not expect unclouded happiness below. Would you have what is mortal become immortal ; and momentary enjoyments exempt from the general vicissitude of things ? Look into futurity ; think of that period, when in happier worlds, good shall be found without any alloy of evil. If love torments you ; invite to your heart all the charms that may dissipate its illusion. Bind yourself, like Ulysses, to the masts of your vessel, that you may not be drawn aside by the song of the Syren. Trust me, happiness is not an inmate of the passions : Short-lived are their pleasures ; but their agonies know no end. What floods of sorrow do they occasion ! What victims do they sacrifice ! How many unfortunate mortals, at the foot of altars, in the gloom of cloisters, all their lives lament with groans their having known the tyrants ! It is said, indeed, that they are the spring of happiness, the arts and virtues, and that without their impulse the wheels of a moral universe would never be set in motion. Ah ! my dear Faldoni, beware how you adopt this soul-destroying system ! To feel, and to resist, is the business of life. Love is not to be stifled ; it is not to be torn from the heart ; but it must be captivated, constrained, and submitted to reason. True, this is a painful task ; but, the reward is, that success crowns our efforts. I mean

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to give you my opinion fully on this subject; so expect a long letter from me. You shall have the result of my observations through life; and, perhaps, it may be my good fortune to convince you that happiness means no more than serenity of heart and absence of its tyrants, the passions.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

WHAT would you think of a quack, who should say that the poisons which infect the earth, are bestowed on us by the bounty of nature, because some of them are used in medicine; or, if he should assert that mankind could not exist unless the chymist infused in their veins the venomous juices of the viper, because they are converted to the purposes of the opiate? Yet thus it is that sophists, in defence of the passions, by rash logic draw from a few detached facts general consequences. Nature, with a watchful eye to our happiness, has given us that intimate sentiment, that organ of the soul, which we call instinct, to animate us in the pursuit of pleasure, and the shunning of pain. From this inclination and aversion proceed the primitive passions; but they are few, because the Creator accomplishes his ends by the shortest means. Man, abusing his liberty multiplies his wants, and swerves from the order of nature and the laws prescribed to all sensible

beings. He must learn to moderate or rectify the bias of his instinct that strays in forbidden paths ; the love of self-preservation must restore him to himself, and sad experience of error must teach him to discriminate falsehood from truth, shew him how his interest is injured or promoted, recall to his mind the eternal verities of which he had lost sight by rash innovation, and give him a clue through the labyrinth of his own wishes. This is the birth of reason, which properly implies the perfection of instinct. Why are the rational powers of savages so limited ? Because, having few wants or durable affections, they have not many occasions for the exercise and perfection of their instinct. There are passions for which they want words, because language being but an expression of the thoughts, the names of strange passions can form no part of their vocabulary.

We possess two faculties, appointed by the author of nature to unfold instinct, imagination, and memory ; the first receives and retains the impression of objects ; the other awakens the recollection of them ; and when this impression is very violent, it excites a lively sentiment, which by continuance becomes a passion. To these causes may be added our proneness to imitation, the force of example, and the prevalence of habit.

It has been justly remarked that the passions are contagious ; you are affected while you listen to the narrative of a man who relates his misfortunes ; you sympathise with his emotions ; you feel the softening influence of grief, and bear him company in his tears. What is the reason that

that in a theatre you are alternately moved by sorrow and joy, with the confidence of hope and the anxiety of fear? What have you to do with the distresses of Phedra and Iphigenia? Why should you be concerned for the son of Merope, and the husband of Zenobia? You entered the playhouse a stranger to care; what has happened since to disturb the serenity of your mind? Why do these streams gush from your eyes? Why does the bursting sigh fwell your bosom? Have you heard of the death of some beloved friend? No; you weep for the people who lived two thousand years ago, and you will carry home with you impressions deep enough to disturb your slumbers, and harass your imagination with distressing dreams.

Habit, or that disposition which arises from frequent repetition of the same acts, is nursed by our inclination to embrace whatever is least painful. Instinct constantly reverts to pleasing objects, by which its action is facilitated; and it abandons itself to its bias, as the river rolls in the channel worn by its own tendency. When habit is determined by education, and strengthened by example, it sometimes alienates instinct, alters the temper, and destroys or weakens the original propensities. This produces a conflict of jarring passions, a war of wills, an opposition of principles; a man naturally peaceful grows turbulent, restless, industrious to promote the interests of his avarice or ambition; and thus a glowing votary to pleasure, sacrifices its enjoyment for the sake of honours and renown. In the midst of this confusion, let reason elevate her voice, let her say to the wretch on the rack of

discord, You ought not to follow blindly either the prejudices of habit or education, nor your deposed natural inclinations ; I alone claim your obedience ; how can you expect happiness should make her abode in a heart, torn by the tyranny of so many different masters.

I admit that we owe to the passions some social virtues ; but surely a far greater number of vices ? If heroes are their children, how much more does their family abound in highwaymen ? If they embellish the faculties of some men, of how many more do they distract the understanding, corrupt the heart, and ruin the constitution ? When a shallow moralist extols the power of the passions and their wonderful effects, I esteem him as an empiric who exalts the virtue of a fever, and the activity which it gives to the circulation of the blood.

Is any thing more opposite to the passions than reason ; since the former continually drives us to extremes, and the latter keeps us in a just equilibrium ? Who will deny that virtue is the object of that equality, from which results the harmony of the universe ? Is it not a disgrace to suppose that generous actions must be performed in the fit of a delirium ? What then, to become virtuous, must we annihilate reason ; and cannot one be a great man, without insanity ?

Virtue is the love of order ; whatsoever estranges the will from perfect agreement with the laws of order, is therefore essentially opposite to virtue. How can the passions which only act by violent starts, irregular motions, arbitrary and variable laws, preserve the equilibrium of the

senses and reason, in the irresolute fickleness of the soul?

Believe me, my friend, happiness and virtue are found only with moderation; a soft voice; a gentle gale, fragrant odours, are delightful; but thundering storms, dazzling lustre, shrieking cries, and strong scents wound our organs, and leave behind them disagreeable impressions. Nature, by bestowing on us a delicate organization, teaches us to avoid every thing which may disarrange it; she shews us, by the models of beauty placed before our eyes, that from the harmony, proportion, and unity of their parts, flows that inexpressible charm which wins our approbation. If she has created passions, their course is bounded, and she commands them to accompany the real wants of mankind. Hence, the savage clans who rest in their original institutions are not susceptible of durable emotions; their transient resentment does not weave the dark and intricate plots which are contrived by our depraved hearts; and their love is only a physical sentiment excited by the presence of its object, and fugitive as the pleasure with which it is gratified. In this state, man may be happy, because he acknowledges only the impulse of nature; but when, subject to the capricious laws of our social contract, instinct is lost in the chaos of factious passions, he is perpetually crossed in his motions, and frustrated by his designs. The soul becomes passive, amid the crowd of contending inclinations; in the disarrangement of the senses, she connects ideas of the greatest disparity; substitutes the phantoms of the imagination for real objects; makes use of reason itself to justify her errors; abuses words, things,

things, and fixed principles ; and stops not, till wearied out and stupefied, as it were, it is obliged from the tumult to seek repose. Nature, who impressed the stamp of thought on the forehead of man, there paints, in successive scenery, all the internal emotions ; the palpitations of fear, the convulsions of anger, the cares of ambition, the corroding pangs of envy, the agonies of love.— Do these alarming symptoms announce felicity ? Is the inhabitant at ease while his house is in a conflagration ? I admire those investigators of the human heart, who are champions in behalf of the passions ! They are awed by no difficulties ; even avarice finds in them able panegyrists !

For the idea of a happy mortal, let us fix our eyes on the wise man. We shall see him equally calm, whether triumphant or unfortunate ; alike a stranger to unmanly fear and feverish expectation ; enjoying, by a moderate exercise of his faculties, all the blessings of nature ; rejecting nothing allowed him by reason ; refraining, without violence from what she disapproves ; availing himself of the theory of the passions to regulate their use ; sacrificing his taste to his principles ; repressing the fallies of his mind, if they have a tendency to bewilder it ; appearing in society the friend of mankind, ever ready to plead the cause of the absent, to defend the rights of the weak, to bring forward modest merit ; indifferent to all systems, having no object in view but truth ; never adopting an opinion without examination ; never passing sentence, without having weighed the merits of the cause ; making his reflections the base of his conduct ; and to avoid vain repentance, leaving nothing to chance which he can dispose of by prudence.

prudence. None can be more indulgent to his fellow-creatures, whom he serves without hopes of reward. Nay, he does more, he heaps obligations on the individual who studies to injure him, and punishes his enemies with benefits.—Hatred finds no remission to his heart ; it belongs only to weak souls, to children, and infirm age ; it is a proof of impotence ; and the breast that owns the influence of that tyrant, needs no other punishment. The savage crushes the insect, and thinks no more of it ; the philosopher turns aside, and suffers it to live. He knows neither the ambition of honours, nor the love of gold. What are to him the ridiculous importance of rank, or the puerile vanity of title ? Could he be angry, it would be with the blockhead who rates a man's worth by his parchments and dangling ribands ; but nothing can alter the even temper of his soul. The arrows of scorn brush over him without a wound ; he walks beside the arrogant without noticing him ; he lives in the midst of intrigue unmoved by the agitation of its vortex ; he sees courtiers scrambling around him for the gewgaws of grandeur, while the favourites of preferment sit on the top of fortune's wheel. He is amused with every thing, but nothing can give him pain. He meets with no rivals in his road, because he aspires at nothing men every where are his friends, because he has nothing to ask at their hands. What should he wish for ? For wealth, or honours ? He thinks the journey, life, too short to admit of those cares ; and he passes through society like a pilgrim with his staff ready to depart. When he is tired of the world, he finds relief in solitude. There, surrounded by his

his books, he talks with the celebrated dead of every age. What conversation can equal that of Homer and Virgil? How insignificant men appear to him, when he leaves the company of such sublime geniuses! With what pity he hears the justs of witlings, the dull discourse of folly, and the surfeiting confidence of self-love! His acquaintance with the muses renders him proof to the seductions of love; but he yields his heart to the charms of friendship; friendship, the balm of life to every honest heart, which time strengthens, misfortune purifies, superior to fate, and survivor of the passions. For what do we not find consolation in a friend? Love cools; pleasure has its period; riches make to themselves wings and flee away; reputation vanishes; as years advance, mankind retire from our company; we insensibly become strangers in the world; society feels not our loss; youth and the graces, are objects of universal attraction; reduced to ourselves, or rather our ruins, dreading solitude, oppressed with languor and melancholy, we seek for an asylum from the tediousness of age, and find it in friendship. We mingle our last tears with her sympathetic streams; and commit to her tenderness the care to scatter roses on our tomb.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

THE man —— What shall I call him ? The protégé of my father has called to take leave of us. I was at my toilette when they announced him ; and immediately wrapped my hands in the dressing cloth, to prevent an accident similar to what happened on the first visit. After making a stiff courtesy, I continued standing, with my eyes fixed on my father all the time he was speaking to him. He had the appearance of a man over-loaded with wealth, while a gold-laced suit of clothes in a very bad taste seemed to increase the awkwardness of his manner. He admired my flowing tresses ; and my father sportively wound them in a wreath round the neck of your Teresa. The Indian was in an extasy ; and raising his two great terrific arms, drew near me. Fearing that he was going to twist them round me like a serpent, I cried out, and was ready to faint away.— You never saw such a figure of stupid surprize, as he stood before me. His mouth gaped, and the sudden contraction of his nerves, if possible, caricatured his odious person. For my part, I felt the same shock as if I had trodden on a snake ; and my blood boiled in a fever. He turned to my father, and asked him, in a stammering tone, if he were so unlucky as to have excited my aversion ? Monsieur de St. Cyran replied, in a stern voice, that a girl of family feels no sentiments but those

those which it is her duty to avow ; and that his daughter must approve of a match so honourable, when sanctioned by her father's wishes to promote it. The wretch laughed with a provoking sneer, which put me quite out of temper. I had the resolution to answer, that I would obey my father in every thing that depended on my own will ; but that I was not mistress of my affections, and that I begged his pardon, if an invincible dislike had betrayed itself in spite of my endeavours to conceal it. He darted an angry look at me ; and bidding me finish dressing myself, went away with his friend. About an hour afterward, my little sister came running in a fright, and rapped at my door. As soon as Deschamps opened it, she sought an asylum between my knees. Sister Teresa, said she, feel how my heart beats ! Heigh ! Lolette, said I, what ails it ? and endeavoured to comfort her with an embrace. The poor child then dried up her tears, and began her relation.— I had entered the great parlour to study a lesson on the harpsichord ; my governess left me for a minute, and I heard somebody talk in the adjoining closet. If curiosity has been said to be my predominant fault, it was sufficiently justified by the present occasion. I drew softly toward the door ; peeped through the key-hole, and saw papa in earnest conversation with mamma, stretching out his arm. (The chit imitated his action.) Yes, said he, she shall obey me, or own her error in a convent. You are too indulgent, Madam, she will be ruined by your tenderness.— To refuse such a husband !—My dear mamma sat next the bureau, apparently much displeased, and every now and then fetched a deep sigh.—

(What

(What a good mother ! I sighed too, and Lolotte put me in mind of it.) She continued her narrative. Papa walked about, taking great strides ; and suddenly rang the bell. Do you want any thing ? said my dear mamma to him.—I wish them to bid her come down.—What, during your present agitation ? I conjure you not to do it till you are more composed. Indeed, Sir, such scenes as these will kill me. A trifle will be sufficient to cut the thread of my life, in its present declining condition. A servant appeared, who was sent back, and a pause ensued in the conversation. Papa sat down, with his arms crossed, for a long while, seeming to ruminate on his ideas.—At last he said, she shall inform me of the reasons of this audacious opposition to my will. To talk to me in that manner ! To put the worthy man to the blush whom I presented to her ! She who hardly dared to breathe in my presence ! What can occasion this insolence ! Has she engaged in any intrigue unknown to us ? Perhaps so. Girls of tender hearts fall into the arms of the first comer, and when the doors are shut, escape at the window. At this, my mamma raised her voice. You forget, Sir, that Teresa is our daughter ; why should you censure her unjustly ? I never saw any thing in her conduct to warrant such a suspicion. Oh ! yes, said papa, you are convinced that she is perfectly right in disobeying me ! I have only to hope that Lolotte will escape the contagion of her example, and that I shall, at least, preserve one of my daughters. Ah ! sister, when my name was mentioned, I listened in a state of palpitation like what you feel at present, and applied my ear to the keyhole with redoubled attention. Lolotte

lotte is a good child, said mamma, and having only virtuous models before her, is in no danger of being spoiled. Papa shook his head ; virtue, as much as you please ! but the first is to obey a father ; and if silly mothers did not countenance such unnatural rebellion, there would be more harmony in families. My dear mamma fell a weeping at this ; and I could not refrain. Oh ! how angry I was with papa for being so naughty. What an inclination I felt to throw myself in the arms of that good mamma ! But as they immediately came toward the door, I ran in a hurry to my harpsichord, and touched a few of the keys.— Papa entering the room, cried, what does this brat do here ? I neither dared to look at him, nor answer him, but continued playing. He articulated between his teeth the word spy, and bade me begone. I walked away, trembling ; but he called me back, and taking my hands in one of his, threatening me with the finger of the other ; if you are refractory, said he, you shall see, you shall see the fate of disobedient daughters—and so he let me go. The tears started to my eyes, for he had almost broke my fingers with his squeeze ; and look, sister, they are still red ! At last, however, I escaped, and flew to tell you all. Do not you thank me for being so attentive ? Don't cry, sister, if they oppres you, I will share your sorrows. Overcome with the friendship of this chit, I pressed her to my bosom, and gained her promise to give me an account of what she should hear in future. Cruel necessity ! to have recourse to spies ! But this is the consequence of unnatural severity in fathers. With what emotion I listened to the artless story of Lolotte ! I dissolved

dissolved in tears ; and the amiable child, while she talked to me, played with the ringlets of my hair. Happy age, the object of Teresa's envy.

LETTER XXXI.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

MISS de St. Cyran was nursed by my land-lady. It would delight you to hear her talk of Teresa ; but how shall I do justice to what the good woman has told me ? Methinks I see the charming maid approaching her mother after having recently offended her ; I see Madam de St. Cyran withdraw the hand which Teresa attempts to kiss ; the trembling daughter falls before her, embraces her knees, bathes them with her tears, and exclaims, O mamma, if I may not touch your hand, will you deny me to kiss your feet ? Do you not fancy that you too are a spectator of the relenting mother's forgiveness ? Do you not see her raise the suppliant girl, and compose her anguish with an embrace ? What a picture ! Can you refrain, Sir, from mingling your tears with mine, which stream while I attempt to delineate it ! This pathetic, soul-subduing language flowed from the lips of a child but seven years old ! Justina knows not how interested I am in her relations ; but perceiving that they gain my attention, she dedicates

cates whole evenings in this way to my entertainment. And when she happens to recollect some little stroke that had escaped her, we exult together like the discoverers of a new country. She has been at Lyons for some days, where she will have the satisfaction of seeing her child ; at my desire the good creature took a basket of flowers with her, which she has promised to deliver to Teresa, as a present from her husband.

It rains here without intermission ; from every little walk I return wet. Surely never was so dismal a spring ! We crowd to the chimney corner as if it were winter. As soon as I get home, I order my landlady to make up a good fire, and taking a book, sit fixed like a statue by the side of it ; but if I meet with a striking sentiment, my old wounds bleed afresh, and the tears gush in fountains from my eyes. What a sick heart ! What a weak head is mine ! When will my sufferings end ? Must my days be lengthened in this melancholy career ? My misfortunes affect my temper ; I am grown hasty, peevish, and hard to please ; and, what is worse, seem distressed by the happiness of others.

A few days since I was fitting in the valley, reading the Essays of Montaigne for my amusement ; some children of the village came and sported about me, without exciting my attention. But, a player on the fymbal appearing, the little company engaged him, for the pence they could collect together, to exert his skill for their diversion. However the noise so disturbed me in reading, and the instrument was so out of tune, that I could bear it no longer ; but getting up in a peat, I put a small piece of silver into the playr's hand,

hand, and sent him away. The poor children seemed thunder-struck ; and distress sat on every countenance. I could not help blaming my conduct on reflection ; this, said I to myself, is the privilege of the wealthy, to disturb at their pleasure, the humble happiness of the vulgar ! What right had I to interrupt the innocent amusement of these children ? Were they not as free as I on their own ground ; and if their neighbourhood grew troublesome to me, was I not at liberty to remove elsewhere ? Humbled by these considerations, I presented them with some money to make them amends. This gave birth to another reflection in my mind ; said I to myself, it is the impudence of wealth to think of repairing at the price of gold, the injustices it commits toward the poor. Indeed I saw too plainly that the young gentry were not satisfied ; and, therefore, went in search of the fymbal player, whom I brought back, and then left the valley.

How can one distress these amiable creatures whose weakness and ingenuousness have such claims to our friendship ? I never see a child without thinking of my first years ; and feel a delicious satisfaction in tracing back those pure pleasures, that enchantment of unalloyed felicity which since I have never been able to find. Alas ! where now are the charms of my school-life, the longed-for holidays, and the rural walks with my school-fellows ? These enjoyments vanish at a certain age. But, as we become greater children, are we more happy ? That dry reasoning which reduces all our pleasures to rule ; that art of life which only means the art of growing

ing disgusted ; that knowledge of the world which serves no better purpose than to veil the treachery of the heart ; and those societies in which vice appears in the habits of decency, have made me frequently regret my balls, my tops and my holidays. I cannot even meet with a book belonging to my old classes, without a sigh. How serene was I when a student of its pages ! What rapture was my portion during the half hour's recreation that came between my lessons and my meal ! What dejection did we feel when the ugly bell, interrupting our sport, summoned us back to our forms ! I cannot think without emotion of the house where I was brought up ; and the places that recall the first pleasures of my childhood, always strike with a new impression.

I have raised in my garden a bower exactly like that in which I sat with you and Miss de St. Cyran, at that feast which I shall never forget ; to complete the imitation, a rivulet glides through it, and a bank invites to repose. There I spend luxurious hours, thinking of you, of her, of every thing which I have forsaken. When I see the smiling villagers, returning from their daily labours in the evening ; the woodman loaded with branches ; the shepherd leading home his flocks ; the whole company returning with songs, I am tempted to envy their felicity. They are strangers to the fever of vain desires ; the melancholy anguish of love finds no place in their bosoms. I could sometimes guide the share with the ploughman, and turn up the glebe in furrows. As if labour could bring me relief ! Fond effort ! where can peace be found for a wounded mind ? I am grown silent and sad ; a secret lan-

guor

guor preys on my soul, and renders it painful for me to speak. Averse to, and even afraid of, company, I shun it, having long learned to derive all support from myself. Yet, I am sensible that my retreat is an error. Man, detached from the species, grows sullen and misanthropic. The picture of human misery which he draws in solitude, cannot be enlivened by the moving scenes of life. There he constantly feeds on his own bitter reflections ; there love tyrannises over a heart exposed to all its tempests ; and ruihes through the veins in torrents of fire. Ah ! my friend with what charms she pursues me through the shades of this wilderness ! How entirely she possesses my heart ! Her voice, her looks, her every motion, seize my imagination at the moment I am writing to you. Fair idol of my soul ! At tonce my torment and my delight ! Are you, then, no more to me ? Must I never see you again ? Spring appears impertinent ; I sometimes wish that the fields were covered with snow, and that the river had overflowed the banks of its channel. The leaden course of time is insupportable ! Alas ! some find the hours glide serenely, they are wafted with satisfaction on the gentle stream ? I would force them along with impetuosity ; and am restless, till they stop short, to plunge me in the abyss for ever.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

SEND me no more books, my dear Mentor, I seldom read. What can men or their dusty volumes teach me, to whose eyes nature displays her own magnificent picture? Oh! were my soul disengaged from its care, in my rural solitude, how pleased should I be to trace the mazes of endless vegetation, the succession of the seasons, and the courses of the stars, whose charming influence frequently leads me astray in my nocturnal fallies. Every morning I walk three or four miles; and find this bodily exercise necessary to dissipate the solicitude of my mind. I have formed a friendship with a dog, to whom I gave shelter; we are always together; and when I go out, he runs on before. I read, or muse as I walk; go whither I please, and stop when I like; am neither a slave to servants nor horses; nor obliged to fix the hour of my departure, or of my arrival; neither am I condemned to dine or sleep in a disagreeable inn; and, if a landscape strikes me, my pencil is at hand to delineate it. Sometimes, on the top of a neighbouring mountain, I visit a tree that shoots its branches in a picturesque style; or the shade of some willows that wave over the banks of a pond; or the shelter of a thick forest, the entrance of which forms at distance a gloomy arcade, while all the country around is a scene of dazzling brightness. How delightful thus to travel! I remember the transport I felt on my journey

journey when first the roses of Aurora struck my sight, emerging from the twilight, and streaking the east with their vivid hues ; when the morning zephyrs sported in my hair ; and my feet brushed from the spires of the grafs the drops of glittering dew. With what extasy did I behold, the rising king of day, darting his glory over hill and dale ! The air and the exercise soon excited so hearty an appetite that I was obliged to stop and furnish myself at the next village with a stock of bread and fruits ; and when I had fixed on a spot agreeable to my rustic sensuality, I sat down to my repast. I usually chose the margin of some clear spring, a verdant meadow, and an humble cottage with the recommendation of a dairy. If I met in my road an honest traveller whose features prejudiced me in his favour, I introduced myself to his company, and we walked together till I felt an inclination again to be alone.

I sat out early this morning, and having taken a turn round the castle of Ormes, I plunged into a valley, which as it opened before me, displayed an immense plain, enriched with a variegated rural landscape ; the Rhone proudly rolled his billows through it, and seemed to leave with regret the enchanting prospect. I walked briskly, and my spirits elevated by the delightful view, inspired me with unusual gaiety. I met an old man, returning from the forest, laden with wood ; a tattered uniform, that half covered him, spoke his original profession. An old soldier is my glory ; his furrowed face has something venerable and commanding. I accosted the good man ; and between people of simple characters like us, a connection is easily formed. He began talking

of his daughter, as the greatest care of his life. It seems that she was in love with a young peasant who had the misfortune to be enrolled in the militia, and was killed soon after. The poor girl has ever since been inconsolable ; her organs were too delicate to support the shock ; and she has lost her reason. The hope of affording her relief, gave me an inclination to see her ; I desired the old man to gratify it ; and taking up part of his burden to lighten the journey, we walked together to the cottage. At the bottom of the chamber I saw a young girl sitting in an elbow-chair ; the paleness of her visage, the languishing wild look of her eyes, and the attention paid her, announced to me the wretched victim of love. I approached her with that respect bordering on fear, which I have always felt at the sight of the unfortunate. My dear Agathe, said her father, this gentleman comes to give you consolation. She surveyed me steadfastly, and, shaking her finger, made a sign to me, that it was a vain undertaking. I could hardly restrain my tears ; she saw them starting, and said, Do you weep for my dear Alain ? Ah ! Sir, had you but known him ! He was a young man so gentle, so humane ! He is no more ! And her grief burst in torrents. Suddenly she drew from her bosom a paper, which as she pressed to her lips, her groans redoubled ; she afterward presented it to me. Poor ! Poor Alain ! she exclaimed, see how he used to write to his Agathe ! I read a letter, written in a natural and affecting style, where love was expressed with all the simplicity of nature. Don't keep it, she cried, stretching out her hand to take it, it is all I have left of Alain, except his hat there !

there ! She caused the hat to be brought; held it to her heart ; kissed it ; talked to it. She then seemed to listen, and made signal of distress and disappointment. At last she turned to me, and said, joining her hands in an agony, her face bathed with tears, when will he return ? Every day I visit the tree, under whose shade we parted. Ah ! Sir, how often have I poured fountains from my eyes under that tree ! It stands at the lower side of the house ; and I never see it without feeling a thousand agonies. But I will teach you a song that I lately made ; and here she began singing these words, in notes that might melt a heart of marble :

Adieu, my father, mother too,
For ever both I bid adieu!
Into the grave I shall descend,
And by my love my sorrows end.

I could refrain no longer ; the shower that had been gathering in my eyes, discharged itself ; her mother embraced her, and every body fighed. Mamma, said she, I am in great pain ; my head and my heart ache. Seeing her mother in tears, she said, compose yourself, dear mamma ! No, I am not in pain ; look at me, Sir, do you see me weep ? At this, she took my hand, and put it to her eyes ; then, rising hastily, I am going away ; I see plainly that every body is unhappy on my account. No, dear child, we are all merry, said her unfortunate mother ; and taking her other daughter and me by the hand, she fell a dancing with us, though the tears streamed from her eyelids. I will dance too, said Agathe, mamma ! sing that country-dance Alain used to

play on his flute, my favourite tune ! Her mother sung it ; Agathe was soon in an alarming condition ; she fell a howling ; she threw herself on the ground ; she called on death. When this fit was over, she became senseless, and was put to bed. I left the house, shocked at the dismal scene ; walked at random, weeping, sighing, sick, bewildered, almost mad. What need had I of such a sight ? Are not my own woes sufficient ? said I. Perhaps the same fate attends me ! How happy ! It is reflection that kills us ; reason pours venom into our burning wounds. Yes, I would think no more, reason no more, live like the beasts ; and time might heal the disorders of passion. Indeed, my friend, I frequently wish my understanding to be lost in the confusion of its ideas, that no trace in memory might remain of my original condition. To love without hope ; to be ever haunted with the dismal image of a forlorn futurity ; to be banished by the object of my affection, yet still continue her slave ! While I am fleeing from her, to feel my heart riven by the separation ! What a punishment ! Shall I not envy the lot of Agathe ! Ah ! my friend, in such an alternative, can it be a misfortune to lose one's reason !

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

I HEAR that my father is dying; I am going to close his eyes. That good father! I have cruelly neglected him! My foolish heart had almost forgotten that he existed; and now I am going to lose him! Engrossed by my unfortunate passion, nature was alienated from my bosom.

Adieu! Sir, I fly to Lyons; but cannot go without first seeing Miss de St. Cyran. Forgive me, if I break your laws; have compassion on my distress! Heavens! I must go; at what a crisis! I must leave my life behind me! When to view this spot again? May not every thing have assumed a new face at my return?

LETTER XXXIV.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

DEAR Constantia, what am I to think of a late event? It still appears to me like a dream.—Yesterday I was with my mother; and she mentioned Faldoni in terms of applause. At that instant he made his entrance. On the point of go-

ing a voyage to Leghorn (called thither by the danger of losing his father) he came to take leave of us. He bowed at the word leave, with a visible emotion ; and I, in the consternation of fear, let fall my work. I was seized at first with a trembling, and sunk from thence into a stupor.—Madam de St. Cyran expressed her wishes to see him again, and gave him a strong invitation to return to Lyons, should the restoration of his father's health permit the journey. She added, that he might depend on a hearty welcome at all times in a house where he had won the esteem and friendship of every body. But, continued she, seeing him raise his handkerchief to his eyes, why this excessive sensibility ? You are not bidding us farewell for ever ; your stay at Leghorn may be shortened, Heaven may work miracles for your father ; you will return hither ; Mr. Faldoni, you will find us the same, exactly in the friendly disposition you leave us. You will return, do you hear ? I pray you do. And she laid an emphasis on the last words of her speech. He arose much affected ; and leaning on her hand, which he pressed to his lips, Ah ! Madam, you are too generous ! Pardon my weakness ! Pardon me if I make you a confidant of my affliction ! But I have had my troubles, and you see them increase ; on the brink of losing my father.—Here he was stopped by his tears — You talk of your troubles, said the best of women to him, would it be disagreeable to recall their object to your mind ? May it not be in my power to alleviate them ? Consider me as your friend ! I listened with the most eager attention ; every moment I trembled lest the fatal secret should escape from her ; my eyes were fixed on

on her lips. Have the goodness to hear me, continued he ; your kindness emboldens me to ask you a favour ; and I solicit it on my knees. He fell at my mother's feet, who immediately raised him from the floor. This action made me shudder ; what could he be going to say ? In an agony of apprehension I arofe, and would have left the room, but he prevented me.—No, Miss, he cried, you too must hear me ; you are going to be married.—Well, said Madam de St. Cyran, what interest do you take in the settlement of my daughter ?—What interest ! Madam, my life, my happiness is at stake.—If it be true, the favour I have to beg of you is everlasting banishment from your presence. Alas ! you know not the excess of my rashness ! I have dared to raise my eyes to an object above me ; I have had the audacity to breathe my vows in the ears of your daughter ; I, whom fortune has placed at such an immense distance below her. What would you have me say ? It is granted that I was distracted, and continue so still. To be sure my delirium was pitied ; and my pardon most condescendingly granted. After such a declaration I deserved to be punished with eternal exile, but it was my fortune to address an angel ; and her goodness beheld in me a patient who needed indulgence. I blundered egregiously, mistaking that for a favourable return of my passion, which was only the balm of humanity. Continually in danger of betraying myself by the wildness of my affection, that divine guardian obliged me to withdraw. I will not undertake to describe my sufferings in solitude, not daring to approach the doors that were shut against me, and

hourly wishing to die. At last, with the serpent of despair preying on my heart, I forsook my forlorn asylum, and was going to pay the last duties to my father.—Venerable old man ! who took more than parental care of my childhood ! How has Heaven avenged thee of my ingratitude ! I was going to seek occasion for fresh tears, when on my arrival here, I heard the news of this fatal marriage. Ah, Madam ! Ah, Miss ! Not a thunderbolt could have more alarmed me ; I stood motionless at the news, as if struck with the arrow of death. As I recovered from my lethargy, I ran home like a raving madman ; and in my first disorder (Heaven forgive me), resolved to free myself from the shackles of life. But Hope, whose cheering beams glance on the most wretched, made me doubt the truth of the report, and determine to be satisfied of it from your own lips. I conjure you, therefore, by all that is sacred, announce my destiny ! I know not, said Madam de St. Cyran, whether I ought to answer you in your present condition. You seem beside yourself ; and without examining whether a mother may prudently satisfy your demand, I desire first to see you composed.—Well ! Madam, I am calm, but I shall not be so, when the clock gives the signal for my departure. Speak, I beseech you. I will, said the kindest of mothers, but do not interrupt me. You are young, Mr. Faldoni, with a heart susceptible of deep impressions.—But luckily you have an excellent understanding, and by taking pains with yourself, may retrieve your errors. Some mothers would have received you with less indulgence. You are sensible, Sir, that honour

honour forbids such an attack on virtue as the making private addresses to a young lady. This is opening the road to seduction; and it is no more allowable to kindle a clandestine passion in the simple heart of inexperience, than to set fire to the house of an unsuspecting neighbour.— What would you have the mother of this child, then, say to you, Sir, who have owned a conduct which I cannot approve? Ought I not, as you have desired, to shut my doors against you? But violent remedies are not to my liking; and your frankness deserves indulgence. To confess more, I am no stranger to your sentiments, and you have found the only way to disarm my resentment, by this declaration of them. Yet, how shall I forgive your behaviour! Have you not done us an injury? Suppose that two young people who have a mutual inclination for each other may be reciprocally seduced by love; you must allow that a man whose principles should be strengthened by experience, is more blameable than a girl of eighteen years. I do not say this in vindication of Miss; for I refer to another time the lesson I have to give her. Besides, to reduce you to a dilemma, if you thought this passion unwarrantable by the laws of society, why did you admit it to your bosom? And if you thought it lawful, why keep it a mystery from me? Answer this; and when I am satisfied, it will be my turn to inform you of my daughter's destiny.— Ah! Madam, exclaimed the rash man, how strong is reason, when the heart is unconcerned! But what a painful situation is mine! To love without the least hope of conciliating esteem! To

see every thing in opposition to my inclination, yet have no power to resist it! What struggles have I not endured, before I could resolve to speak! Heaven alone was witness to my tears.—I champed my bit; I plunged into the desert like a roaring lion; sleep, mirth, tranquillity were no more. Weary of the conflict, I sunk under it.—Is man invincible; or has not his power limits like his courage? Unable to go down with my secret to the grave, I have deposited it in the heart of this innocence, as I would confide an offering to the altar; and I attest the Almighty, who hears me, that I alone am guilty. Do not condemn the most virtuous of daughters, who has sacrificed every consideration to her duty.—I don't think so, said my good mother, my daughter ought to have informed me of the first syllable that escaped your lips.

Here, Constantia, the guilty creature, trembling, hardly able to move, drew near her mother, fell at her knees, with supplicating hands, and a face bathed in tears.—Pardon, pardon, Madam! For the sake of Heaven, pity my weakness; I am more criminal than you have heard; yes, I am, continued I, kissing her feet; you know not half my faults; I must be my own accuser. At that moment I seemed to be raised above myself; I felt a supernatural inspiration.—Behold, said I, drawing papers from my bosom, behold my crime! These are letters that I have received; let my answers be likewise shewn to you! Madan de St. Cyran arose with an air of conscious dignity, and leaving me prostrate where I lay, she advanced toward Faldoni, who retreated

ed with all the emotions of fear. What have I heard, Sir? You have dared to write to my daughter? To write secretly to her! You, in whom I placed confidence, thus to abuse it? Did I listen only to the dictates of my resentment, my daughter should to-morrow be confined in a cloister; and you should never more appear in my presence. How can you apologize for your temerity?—I apologize for it, Madam! he exclaimed with warmth, did I not charge myself with being mad, and at war with every virtuous principle? But for this angel, whose purity saved me, who knows how far I might have proceeded! Do not believe, Madam, her self-accusation. Here are the only letters which my importunities could force from her; condescend to read them, and do justice to innocence! For my own, they carry with them their excuse, the language of insanity, for which you must pity me. No, Sir, replied my generous mother, gravely, nothing can excuse your conduct; and as to the style, that is of no consequence. By your way of reasoning every criminal action might be risked, and the perpetrator have only to plead his insanity! Heavens! what would become of society were this logic generally admitted! Besides, if a young man, a stranger, unconnected with the society in which he lives, seeks by sinister means to surprise the heart of an indiscreet girl, where is the wonder? But that this girl, brought up with sentiments of honour, and whose blood is derived from the unfulfilled fountain of virtuous ancestry, should be so lost as to answer these clandestine letters, is what I cannot bear; and the last thing I expected to find exemplified in my own daughter!

ter ! You, Sir, have favoured me with this discovery ; at how dear a price ! You have taught me to estimate the merit of those adventurous young men, who, being well received in a family, fancy themselves entitled to disturb its tranquillity, and mark their visits with the baneful traces of the flames that they leave behind them.—I crawled on my knees to the tribunal of my judge. O, Madam, for Heaven's sake let me be immured in a cloister, it is the only favour I can implore. I can never again look up to my mother ; never more support her reproaching eye ; banishment is my only resource ! And I bowed my forehead to the floor, sobbing plentifully. Arise, said my kind mother, embracing me ; learn from this lesson to mistrust yourself ; and I hope, Sir, you will in future pay a more respectful attention to the laws of decorum ! On these terms I permit you to see us again. You must have possessed real merit to have gained the heart of my daughter ; you have good friends ; I have heard you mentioned with the warmth of esteem ; and people, whom I honour, express a regard for you ; endeavour to deserve their favourable opinion by imitating their example. It is true that the marriage of my daughter has been talked of, but not brought to a conclusion ; perhaps on the present footing it never may. In that case, offer yourself nobly, and like a man, whose hand need not to be disdained by any one. Declare yourself with becoming assurance and freedom, and you may perhaps be successful. For I am not confined to the sole consideration of fortune and family in the choice of a husband for my daughter, so as at all events, where they are wanting, to give a denial. Perhaps

haps the man whom I would have banished, may be the only one calculated to render her happy, and I would not give her occasion to reproach me with having deprived her of the least virtuous pleasure in life. Ah ! my dear mother ! was all I could say, and fell again on my knees before that heavenly woman, whom I encircled with my arms. I wept, trembled, attempted to speak, put my hand to my bosom as it were to release a prisoner, for really my heart was in a pitiable state of palpitation. Faldoni likewise threw himself at her feet. She raised him directly ; talked of his voyage ; desired him to let his friends hear from him every opportunity ; and pressed him to return and see us. He, with a profound bow, hastened his departure, taking leave of us with tears.

We set out to-morrow for the country, whither my father is gone before ; our packets are made up ; every thing taken away, and hardly paper left for me to write. Adieu ! my dear Constantia, I seem to be going to the world's end. Alas ! what signifies whither I go ? I am sure of not seeing him there.

I have lost Lolotte, who is to be placed in a convent. Mr. —— the Curate has just got a living ; his great age obliges him to decline the service of his curacy, and he has promised my mother to follow her to Ormes.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

WHEN shall I have the satisfaction of seeing you at Ormes ? You know, when we parted, it was your mother's promise that you should come and reside here. Are you resolved to delay your journey till the sultry heat of the season renders it impracticable ? Come, dear cousin, fly to relieve my impatience. My heart is dreadfully dejected. How tedious time seems to the wretch who is alone in nature, who has nothing to fix her attention ! I look around me, and see no one to converse with. What is become of *him* ? How is *he* employed ? Where is *he* ? During the month he has been absent, I have not heard his name. Perhaps he is paying the tributary tear to the loss of his father ! I am distressed by this silence ; and the dulness of the life I lead is an additional weight to my sufferings. The most rigid of mankind perpetually straitens me with his presence ; my grief and languor are, with him, criminal ; he blames me for the slavery of my soul, as if it depended on my own will to be free. My mother appears to sympathize with me in my sorrows, but dares not give me the verbal consolation of her pity. Dear friend, why are you not at hand to administer comfort ? I am surrounded by strangers ; and rural leisure, a more social principle than city indolence, occasions me to be plagued with a crowd of

of unwelcome visitors. My brother is returned from his travels ; when he sat out on them, I was so young, that he is absolutely unknown to me.— What persecutions may not this brother prepare for your Teresa ! I look forward to the future with painful apprehension ; and reflecting on the gleam of happiness that I enjoyed for some months, my heart shrinks at the prospect. I am angry with myself for not having followed the inclination that led me to the asylum of solitude.— Here I live to-day exactly as I shall to-morrow, as I shall a month hence ; my senses are wearied with this tedious uniformity of time. Our walks are mechanical ; we make the round of these stately woods that speak nothing to the heart ; take books in hand, without reading them ; and end the career of insipidity in disgust. Ah ! Constantia, I am an incompetent judge of my own happiness ; when it was in my power to see him, I obliged him to remove ; now I wish for him in vain ! Shall I always be this self-contradictory creature ? Must I eternally love, repent, vow, and abjure my promises ?

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

I TOLD you of my brother's arrival ; since his return, we have had nothing but feasting and visits ; the whole neighbourhood must be welcomed ; we run from one farm to another, and are in perpetual motion. If you wish to know, Constantia, what sort of a man you have for a cousin —he is tall and well-made ; of manners elegant, but a little too satirical ; and, by his haughty airs, frequently discovers himself to be the worthy son of my father. He pays me particular attention, and will have no great difficulty to win my esteem. How charming to find a friend in a brother ; and, by listening to her voice, to fulfil the bounteous intention of nature ! A brother ! is another self ; our blood flows in his veins ; and we were fostered at one bosom. What a pity that our souls should not bear the same stamp, when we so agree in every thing else as to seem but one being ! I am much disposed to love him, but confidence, familiarity, those delightful occasions of a heart that scorns reserve—Ah ! cousin, these are enjoyments that belong only to friendship, and consanguinity is out of the question.—Friendship, the sweetest blessing that we taste below, the gift of Heaven ! is not capriciously formed in a moment. It demands the experience of a whole life ; it requires that, like us, two hearts should have lived in each other from the dawn of lisping infancy ; and have displayed on every occasion

casion the energy of this sentiment. It requires, if I may say so, to be united with all the powers of the soul to the object of our inclination ; and this has been our felicity. How fondly I recollect the early period of my life, before Madame Armiane was obliged by her secular concerns to take up her residence in Paris ! I often visit the convent in which we were brought up, the garden which daily limited our walks, the good nuns who loved us with the affection of sisters. Happy age when the heart is free, when the stream of joy is unfullied, when there is no bitterness in recollection ! It vanishes with childhood ; it is lost, my friend, like every other good in nature, and leaves behind only visionary pleasures, and real pains. What tears we shed at the moment of separation ! What promises we made to meet again one day, never more to part ! What vows, amid our embraces, of never-dying friendship ! Reasoning like children, nothing appeared impossible to our wishes ; we overlooked the distance that might intervene from the caprices of chance, and the vicissitudes inseparable from humanity.— My memory is still warm with the idea of our adieus ; the keep-sakes, our mutual pledges of affection ; the lime-tree that witnessed the sincerenity of our views. You see, my dear, how we are at last situated ! Severed as if we lived at the distance of the poles, we have barely the liberty of an epistolary correspondence, and even that is under the most rigid limitations. What pains did you take, to gain permission of my family for me to pass a few months with you ! Cruel Constantia, why did you petition for that journey ?— Why was I not suffered to continue in the calm insensibility

insensibility of life ? Alas ! what right have I to accuse my friend ? Was not the decree of destiny inevitable ? Since registered in the volumes of fate, that the unfortunate author of my troubles should meet me at Paris, was it possible for me to avoid him ? No ; for ever blessed be the hour that I saw you, when my woes were soothed by your friendly consolations. You foretold every thing which has happened to me, but at the same time, with what goodness you opposed to your own foresight and reflections, the agreeable visions of futurity ! How often did you mingle your tears with mine, when after an humiliating confession I endeavoured to conceal my blushes in your bosom ! You pitied me for being in love ; yet, added, that how desperate soever my condition, it excited your envy. You envied me ! God of goodness, preserve my friend from such happiness. At length we were obliged to part once-more ; nor can your imagination paint what I suffered by this last separation. My heart seemed to be torn from me ; in losing you, I felt every thing lost, even the sensation of sorrow. You beheld me, while I embraced you, stupidly sad, motionless, not able to utter a word, or to shed a tear. What wonder ? I was about to renounce all the sweets of life. From that moment I have dragged my days in despair. You were my guardian angel ; in your company I dared to see him ; in his absence had the pleasure of talking with you about him ; our conversation was inexhaustible ; the day was too short for it ; and night, though often blamed as leaden-footed, flew with the rapidity of morning. Where could we find such an everlasting theme for discourse ?—The insensible cannot

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cannot conceive, but I know too well. Heaven restore to me those tranquil hours that flowed with the full tide of felicity ! Come, my amiable friend, bring with you your good mother, and whoever is dear in my esteem. I have reserved a charming apartment for you ; we will call it the Temple of Friendship ; it shall be daily hallowed with my vows and offerings. What heaps of incense will I burn to the goddess ! How fervently sincere shall be my adoration ! Come, fly, not a moment's delay ; I die till I see you.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

MY hopes are crushed ! The journey so long talked of, will not take place. Every thing appeared ready for it ; when my aunt was suddenly taken ill, and here we must remain. Tell me again that I am happy ! Yes ; I admire the felicity of my condition !—At what a time comes this fatal delay ! At the very instant when I have the greatest need of your assistance. Oh ! that I had wings to fly to you ! What a mortifying disappointment ! When we have indulged sanguine hopes of possession, to lose the object of our wishes is intolerable. Depending on it, I had made a thousand arrangements in my mind, which a breath has destroyed ; like the castles we were

were formerly so dexterous in building with cards. Ah ! my friend, perhaps we shall never see each other again. I feel a presentiment of this calamity. It struck me at the moment I received your letter ; my heart beat with a violent palpitation ; and, I said, it is all over—to me Constantia is lost for ever ! I would lay the blame on my froward fancy, the industrious anticipator of misfortunes ; but, alas ! it is incorrigible ; nothing can restore my peace, but your presence.

A few days since we dined two leagues from Ormes, at the house of the Barones de Nancé. I sat at table next to a young woman of twenty, who possessed beauty, cheerfulness, and wit. After a quarter of an hour's conversation she became as intimate with me as if we had known each other all our life-time. I happened to question her about a man who sat next my brother. It is my husband, says she ; but, say no more of him, for I do not know him. I smiled, and desired her to inform me how her husband came to be so great a stranger ? What would you have ? she replied, I was married to him at sixteen ; till then trained in a convent, I only conversed with the world through the grates of the parlour. My father cast his eyes on the gentleman you see, and said, with a tone of paternal authority, that is the husband for my daughter. He gave but a hint of his mind to my mother, and she complied. I was not informed of his intention till the day before the contract was drawn up, and that only because it was necessary I should sign it. I was shewn the being in question ; or, rather, he was brought to see me, and found me to his liking. For my part had he possessed nothing but the human figure, he would have

have appeared charming to me, for I was impatient to be at liberty from the dull life I led in the cloister. The marriage treaty was soon settled ; the gates of the monastery opened to me ; and decked in the usual finery, I was led to the altar, where I repeated my lesson to their satisfaction. From thence I suffered myself to be conveyed to the house of my husband, whom I told in a few days that my design was to live independently ; and that in return he was free to follow his own pleasures. This declaration surprised him at first ; but at length he came into my scheme ; and since that time I have heard no more of him. It is an odd chance that has brought us together to-day under the same roof—Oh, my Constantia ! did you ever hear any thing like this ? These, it seems, are what they call matches of convenience ! Can it be true ? Have I not suffered an illusion ! The name of this pretty woman is Madame d'Arbon. She is desirous of my friendship ; but, what connection can one form with such people ? Thanks to my brother ! she does not want an admirer ; and, to my wonder, the husband himself has been the cause of it, who, boasting that he knew her, drew her panegyric with the same apparent indifference as he would that of any other young lady his neighbour.

LETTER XXXVIII.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

I WRITE to you in the midst of groans ; to you I confide the first effusions of my grief. I have lost my father !—Destruction surrounds me ; every object is tinged with gloom ; death's ebon sceptre asserts its universal triumph. How unwillingly I parted from you ! my soul hovered behind me, and never left your habitation. That dear house ; that object at once so charming and so dangerous, the image of which every where pursued me ; the illusive visions of the gay promiser, hope ; all, all, were to be resigned. I was doomed to visit an expiring father, a family overwhelmed with tears, an humble, rural dwelling in which virtue had formerly imparted to me many a valuable lesson, though their influence had appeared too little in my conduct. Between dread, anxiety, distress, and desire, I drew near Leghorn. My soul was oppressed with melancholy on entering the neighbourhood of my father ; the first object that struck me was the house of the pastor ; the poplars originally planted before it, were no longer to be seen ; the little school that stood near it was gone. I recollect a spot, on one side of the parsonage, where we used to play, and saw a set of children so engrossed upon it. This brought to my remembrance the happy, tranquil moments I had enjoyed in that solitude ; my heart was thrilled with

with a painfully-pleasing emotion, and nature sought a vent in tears. I pursued my road with impatience, when our house presented itself to my sight from a neighbouring eminence. The agitation this gave me was so great, that it obliged me to stand still for a few moments. What a train of events had checkered my life since I had left home ! What ineffectual schemes ! What abortive hopes ! And at my return, all my portion, the bitter tears of repentance ! Amid these dismal reflections, I got as far as the yard without being noticed by any body ; the doors were open, the shades of night began to fall and obscure the objects around me. On entering the chamber where my father lay, the spectacle that presented itself was dreadful ; a venerable ecclesiastic fitting by the bedside, was engaged in prayer, by the awful glimmering of a taper. I shrieked ; I sprung toward the bed of death ; I drew back the curtains ; I saw my father a breathless corpse ! Unutterable anguish ! — I fell on my knees, and pressed my lips to the motionless body, from which they could not part me. My tears gushed in torrents ; I called on my father ; I conjured him to open his eyes, that I might devour their farewell, affectionate glances. My soul was torn with horrid remorse for having neglected him ; I said, with profound groans, he is gone, and I did not see him die ! I did not press him to my arms ! I did not receive his last blessing ! Perhaps he had forgotten that he had a son ! I had forgotten him so long ! Oh ! my father, why was I not at your side, when you departed for a better world ? You would have rendered me happy both in this life and that which is to come ; I should

I should have treasured your dying words in my heart; they would have enlightened me over the quicksands of virtue, and through the difficulties of life; before your soul was reunited to its Maker, your prayers with the Supreme for my welfare, would have prevailed.—Here ended my soliloquy; and lifting up the sheet, a sight presented itself, that thrilled my very soul. Ah! Sir, let philosophers call our natural emotions, prejudices; but may they never feel the heaviness of heart that I experienced, when I reflected that my father had gone down to the grave with the belief of my forgetfulness and ingratitude. During an absence of six years, the violence of my passions, the impetuosity of youth, and the distractions of travel, had insensibly erased him from my mind. This was my first crime. Heaven punished me for it: I was soon lost in a labyrinth of errors, and every virtuous sentiment was extinguished in my bosom. The death of my father, by shewing me the gulph that separates this transitory life from eternity has opened my eyes; I am convinced that there must be another world allotted for the correction of vice, and the reward of virtue; I flatter myself that one day I shall re-embrace the objects of my affection, and that we are parted from each other only for a moment. The shade of my father visits me in the dead of night; he seems to summon me away; to assure me that I shall not long linger here below. Whether we quit this scene in youth or age, makes but the difference of a few years: the older we are, the more unwillingly we retire; youth is the best period for our exit; we leave

leave nothing behind us.—Nothing ! did I say ? Gracious God ! Can I forget her who binds me to the earth ?

LETTER XXXIX.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

MY father is obliged to go to Paris, on account of a lawsuit ; he will have the happiness of seeing you, my Constantia ! But, when I say so, why does the idea of this journey distress me ? Why ! because it revives the image of past scenes that will ever be dear to me. What a long time it is since we had the liberty of seeing each other, and conversing together every day ! Life is a chain that connects in various succession, pleasures, pains, enjoyments, and disappointments. When we are happy in a place, why can we not continue there ? Wherefore should we shift our situations ? What is to be gained by removal ? Happiness flies from a crowd ; we had found her, but were obliged to give her up. I shall never forget the year I passed at your house ; that was the æra of my felicity ; and when I am disposed to examine if I am happy, I must compare my condition with my enjoyments in your company. Dear cousin, how much do I esteem you ; and how greatly do you deserve it ! —We are solitary in the shades ; for my brother having thought proper to follow Madam d'Aar-

bon to town, I shall not be troubled with his company for some time. The Curate is our inseparable friend. Did you but know how much I am indebted to him. Alas ! to him I owe my honor, and present consolation. He fortifies my mind with religion, reason, and virtue ; his discourse penetrates my soul like a ray of celestial light ; he raises me above myself ; while the generous man is near me, I learn to triumph over my tyrants, the passions ; for the melancholy that consumes me, I find no relief but in his conversation. Sometimes I prostrate myself in the chapel, and pass whole hours without motion, bathed in tears, imploring Heaven to release me from the chains of love, and to restore me to my native freedom : and leaving this asylum, I seem to breathe with more liberty ; I feel an accession of fortitude. Oh ! Constantia, how sweet it is to address the God of comfort, in confidence of his assistance ! How do I pity those unhappy creatures who have no resource in trouble, having given up the belief of supreme goodness ! Desperate blindness ! not to perceive that in distress nothing is to be expected from man, and every thing from God. The time comes, my friend, when our eyes are open to the illusions of the world ; the charm vanishes that was so seducing ; we grow disgusted with our former enjoyments ; our varying inclinations destroy each other with an amazing rapidity ; we wonder to find ourselves indifferent to those things which for a long time excited our most violent desires. Then what must be the condition of the heart in the dreary void occasioned by the revolution of time and change of circumstances ! Are not they happy

happy who can still direct their views to an object of hope, superior to the capricious alterations of fortune?

By letters from Italy we learn that Faldoni has lost his father; this, you may suppose, does not add to my happiness. My own, you know, is already dead to me. Monsieur de St. Cyran treats me with a degree of severity that so far from being sanctioned by the rights of blood, appears unnatural. I never look at him, nor speak to him, without trembling. When I am driven to the necessity of consulting his eyes, or his face, the least change in either alarms me; my life is spent in the study and dread of this inaccessible father. His formidable aspect invades my very dreams, and last night, my slumbers, tinged with the gloomy apprehensions of the day, presented to my harassed imagination the most terrible assemblage of distressing ideas. My father appeared before me, his eyes flashing with indignation; in one hand he held a sword, and with the other seized Faldoni. I rushed between them, to save the unfortunate man; clasping him in my arms, I shared his wounds, and we both fell together at the foot of an altar. I gave a violent shriek, and awaked, bathed in my tears. Ah! say, why this horrible dream, that seems to forebode some great disaster? I am not superstitiously credulous, yet think that nature sometimes deigns to give us a secret presentiment of approaching misfortunes; I cannot help believing that we have ominous impressions of future hopes and fears; whether they be inward emotions excited by Heaven; or the offspring of instinct, the faithful guardian of our safety; this

I know, that they have never deceived me. Gracious Heaven ! how wilt thou dispose of me ? Am I destined to new trials ? Alas ! cousin, in six months what have I not suffered ? Youth, health, and their companions cheerfulness and bloom, are lost ; I am but the shade of your former friend, and resemble the airy phantoms that hover over the sepulchres which contain their ashes. Where is he now ? Why removed from his Teresa ? How happy was I with him at my side ! Nature must sympathize with my griefs ; my spleen is become unbearable to every body, and poor Deschamps is often the victim of it ; I scold her for having countenanced an amour which it was evident would end unfortunately. How pitiable those, dear friend, who are surrounded with irresistible seductions ! They penetrate the inmost recesses of our asylums, and there is no refuge for us on the couch where we would repose from our troubles, not even in a corner of the retreat where our tyrannical fathers permit us to groan at liberty. A retrospective view I cannot bear, for it seals my condemnation ; I own that I ought to have guarded my heart from the approaches of an ill-starred passion ; or by the efforts of reason to have stifled it at the moment of its birth. I ought—Ah ! do mortals perform every thing they ought ? Where is the man, where is the angel, who does not lean to the gentle whisper of a favourite propensity ? How could I, weak and susceptible by nature, arm my heart with the fortitude of resistance ?—But does inevitable vengeance hang over the heads of rebellious children ? My Constantia, I fear so ; I am incessantly haunted by the furious image of my

my father : yet how can I obey his mandates ? Eternal anguish, a life of insupportable horror must attend the sacrifice ! Ah ! why does he not demand only my life ? I am ready to resign that to the author of it ; but my fate would involve with it that of another ; and am I entitled to make such an offering ? If he has intrusted me with his destiny, shall I abuse the confidence ? I grant these are sophisms, yet they prevail with me ; and if for a moment I resolve on a dutiful acquiescence with parental authority, the spectre arising, checks me, it points to the coffin open to receive it, and at once my virtuous determinations wither. God of mercy, judge me not for disregard of a father's will ! My rebellion is not prompted by sensual depravity ; a father is but a man, who being liable to mistake may mislead us ; but the voice that bids me yield to a virtuous passion, and not wound the affectionate sensibility of a rational being, is the voice of nature, and perhaps thine own. — Since my mother countenances me, I am not entirely criminal ; at least, to think so is as reasonable as to doubt it.

This is a specimen, Constantia, of my daily soliloquies. Yet what do I gain by these conflicts ? My heart faints in the strife, and insensibly I sink into a desperate languor. But it is time to conclude. Adieu ! My tears stream afresh, and render her own characters illegible to the writer.

LETTER XL.

THE CURATE TO TERESA.

Madam,

I UNDERSTAND that you are alarmed at the long silence of your friend ; she has therefore honoured me with the charge of answering your obliging letter, being herself rendered incapable, by illness, of holding the pen. Yet do not despise on her account ; she has hitherto been in less danger than pain. You are no stranger to the cause of her sufferings, as I am well assured, that she has made you the confidant of all her secrets, and that you have read with the freedom of her spiritual guide to the bottom of her soul. How must her present condition awaken your sympathetic sensibility ! Like a drooping flower she withers before her time. Heavens ! what is beauty ! The lovely victim of a changeful moment. For two months that Miss de St. Cyran has pined with a secret languor, she has exhibited a melancholy spectacle of gradual decay. Her unhappy mother has been a witness to it, and groaned with anguish because she could administer no relief. She perpetually conjures me to preserve her daughter. But what can I do between two sufferers, when neither is mistress of her fate ? Is Teresa to blame for the passion to which she is a prey ? Can Madam de St. Cyran remove her malady by uniting two beings that appear to have been born for each other ? Thus I reason, and confine

fine my assistance to spiritual comfort. Dreadful limitation ! when we see those we esteem dying before us. This house, once distinguished for cheerfulness, is now the image of the sepulchre. How shocking the solitude, where every one endeavours to shun the other ! Madam de St. Cyran would never leave her daughter's apartment, but for the fear of being troublesome ; and her parental feelings suffer so much from the distressing scene, that when she quits it, she is constantly bathed in tears. Cruel child ! she cried at that moment yesterday, you will be the death of me. Yet why do I blame her ? I myself alone am culpable, who should have resolutely prevented this misery by a timely removal of the cause.

—I frequently take a chair by the bed side of the dear young lady, and when she is disposed to hear me, produce all the arguments of comfort suited to her love-sick soul. How often has she repeated your name to me ! It is her decided opinion that she shall never behold you again ; and at the recollection of that gloomy idea, her grief has no bounds. She frequently cries, lifting her hands to Heaven, God of my life ! grant me once more to see my friend, the companion of my childhood, the dear confident of my heart ! She proceeds to make the arrangements proper for the hour when she shall be no more ; she bequeaths to you what appears most eligible ; then intreats me to watch your welfare with a tender eye, and supply her place with her Constantia. Sometimes, unwilling to revive her distress, I forbear to mention Faldoni. This caution does not escape her notice, but she says to me with a smile, I perceive and thank you for your delicacy;

yet I am able to hear whatever you can suggest ; and my heart says much more about him than you can tell me.—Never had piety such dominion over a virtuous soul ; her affections seem from disappointment to mount with redoubled ardour to the Divinity. I see a seraph in her, glowing with love to the Supreme. Old as I am in the sacred ministry, shame suffuses my cheek for my lukewarmness, when I witness the fervour of her raptures, that transport her, like Elijah, in a chariot of fire to the Creator. Emanation of unfulfilled goodness ; earth is unworthy of her stay ; a better world is prepared for her congenial spirit ; and happiness in full fruition. What is this tabernacle of men ? The house of mourning and despair, where opinion sways with an iron sceptre, and heaven-born virtue stoops to the tyranny of prejudice.—Pardon the digression of this soliloquy, Miss ; my heart forgot you in the warmth of its indignation. If you approve of my correspondence, I will from time to time give you an account of your friend's health. Do not spare your affectionate letters to her, she needs all your sympathy, it is balm to her wounded mind ; whenever she mentions you, a sudden glow enlivens her complexion. At intervals of ease, she calls for a box that contains your letters ; and spreading them open, she devours their contents with her eyes ; not refraining sometimes to press them ardently to her lips ; while her bosom heaves with a struggling sigh. Charming friend !—she exclaims ; till the violence of her emotions oblige her to give up their perusal.

LETTER

LETTER XLI.

TO THE SAME.

YESTERDAY Miss de St. Cyran, with the assistance of her governess, came down stairs, and took several turns in the garden. Her mother appearing, she curtseyed to her, without speaking, took her hand, pressed it to her lips, and sat down by her. We all remained silent, and this dumb scene continued some time. At last Madam de St. Cyran, her heart bursting with grief, put her arm round her daughter's neck, and, by a gentle inclination, glewed her mouth to the cheek of the lovely mourner. Teresa sighed; tears gushed from her eyes; and she endeavoured to hide her confusion in the bosom of the best of women. Ah! Madam, she cried, what can you think of me? That I am ashamed of my sorrow? —Do these streams then flow from distraction? Why weep? What is my distress? O mother, do you not love me, and yet I am unhappy. Teresa is undeserving of your goodness.—Madam de St. Cyran used every effort to comfort her, and the hopes she gave her of better days, seemed to sooth the anguish of your friend. Finding her strength return, she desired us to accompany her to her nurse's farm. I foresaw how much this visit would affect her, and therefore endeavoured to dissuade her from it; but she persisted in the proposal, and her mother, her governess and I, set out with her in a carriage. Immediately at our arrival

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Justina

Justina fell on her neck ; but taking a nearer view of her, drew back with an affectionate surprise. What do you think of me, nurse ? says the amiable girl with a forced smile. Do you still recollect my features ? You do not congratulate me as usual on the bloom of my complexion ; you see time changes every thing. Justina wept, without answering her. Come, give me your arm, resumed Teresa, and show me your garden, I am told that you have much improved it. I shall take a pride in your embellishments. Then, turning to me, Do you not admire, Sir, the order and neatness of this house ? You are to know that it is my Justina's. The good old creature seemed beside herself with joy ; when her husband coming up, she said something to him, and led us to the garden. Teresa walked with difficulty, and at intervals was obliged to rest. As she entered a little thicket on the edge of the kitchen garden, she gave a sudden shriek, and calling to me, asked in a tremulous voice, Where are we ? See, Sir, it is the same harbour, the same fountain, the same disposition of the trees ! What demon has been at work here to distress me with a revival of old scenes ? She then burst into tears. Justina told her she was obliged for those arrangements to the visit of a stranger. But how shall I give you the panegyric that she drew of his virtues ; or of the satisfaction and softness that sparkled in Teresa's eyes ? For, by that infallible instinct that ever waits on lovers, she immediately guessed who he must be. I mentioned your name to him, added Justina, and though he did not know you, he spent days in hearing me talk of you. She then related the various acts of humanity

nity which had been performed by Faldoni; of his generosity to the poor villagers, how much he was their idol, and how every body was grieved at his departure. Teresa stood in mute attention, her arms hanging down, her eyes fixed on her nurse, her lips ready to devour the most trifling circumstance. What a man! she cried at last, turning to me; Ah! Sir, it was he — She left the sentence unfinished, hid her face in her handkerchief, and as she advanced in the thicket, discovering some letters inscribed on the trees, said to her nurse, Your account of this generous stranger is very interesting; if ever he returns, let him know how attentive I was to his history.— Then turning to her mother, she said, Dear mamma, benevolence should meet its reward.— Undoubtedly, replied that excellent mother, at no loss for her daughter's meaning. Teresa then unpinned a ribbon from her bosom, and giving it to Justina, cried, deliver this to him from me; you need not conceal my name; I give it as a tribute to such exalted virtue. She had scarce finished the sentence, when seeming to have forgot herself, she sunk into her mother's arms. Madam de St. Cyran gave her a profusion of kisses. We were all much affected; the enthusiasm of the dear girl thrilled through every bosom. Divine energy of the good! I never felt such rapture.— We were then shewn the lovers, whom Faldoni had united; so happy, self-endeared a coupel, naturally raised our envy. There, said Teresa, is a match of inclination crowned with felicity!— On returning to the house, a repast was prepared by Justina's husband for Teresa; she tasted of every thing, and seemed to recover her cheerfulness

ness and strength. Madam de St. Cyran gazed unceasingly on her, and at every glance her eyes sparkled with pleasure. She bade me observe the appetite of Teresa ; and thanked Heaven for our fortunate excursion. For my part I dreaded the consequences of the agitation she had sustained, and was alarmed at the irregularity of her meal.—Indeed we no sooner returned to the castle than Teresa began to complain. In the evening a fever attacked her, accompanied with an ague and delirium. At present she is more composed ; and we hope that this shock will have a favourable conclusion.

LETTER XLII.

TO THE SAME.

A STRANGER desired me to repair to the grate of the castle ; it proved to be Faldoni ; we flew into each others arms, when he almost lost respiration. Is she here ? he cried. Can I see her ? Will you present me to her ? Will her worthy mother welcome me with her accustomed goodness ? Does Mr. de St. Cyran ?—Here he stopped short, and I replied only with my tears. I saw him turn pale ; his knees trembled, and he was near fainting away. Ah ! Sir ; what would you tell me ?—That she is dead ?—It was my immediate care to remove this apprehension.

She

She lives, said I, though you may not see her ; she is so weak and wasted by a lingering consumption that she cannot leave her chamber. He trembled at my recital ; his eyes rolled with unusual wildness ; his tongue uttered incoherent sentences ; but at last tears flowed to his relief, and he pressed me in his arms. Come, said he, let us pay a visit to her excellent mother ; how great must be her affliction ! If I can but get admission to the threshold of the daughter's chamber-door ; hear the sound of her voice ; distinguish the charmer's emotions ; I shall return more contentedly. So saying he drew me forward with a trembling hand. I conducted him to the passage. As we approached the castle, he desired me to stop ; his feet were unable to proceed ; his eyes swam in darkness ; his heart beat violently in his bosom, and leaning against a tree, with up-lifted hands, he said, Pardon me, Sir, I can advance no farther ; I cannot go in ; I have not strength sufficient. Then casting his eyes around him, Behold the very scenes of my former fears ! I trace again the same solitude, the same deserted galleries, the same images of death that haunted me when I crossed these apartments. Smiling at his chimeras, I dragged him along. At the appearance of a woman in the hall, he relapsed into his weakness. We arrived at length on the spot. Where am I going ? said he again, with a tremulous air and accent. I made him sit down, and entering the room of Madam de St. Cyran, acquainted her with the return of Faldoni. A thousand anxious emotions took possession of her bosom ; she expressed a disinclination to receive the author of her daughter's sufferings ;

sufferings ; she feared that the sight of him would be too painful to her own feelings ; yet at last determined to admit him. He entered with a sad dejected countenance ; and I left him to prepare Miss de St. Cyran for his visit. She was sitting on a sofa, with your letters spread around her. But immediately quitting their perusal, she desired me to place myself by her. Her cheeks appeared in a burning glow ; her hand bathed mine with the dews of sickness ; and I discovered some symptoms of a fever. I hesitated to mention to her at that instant a name which she never hears without emotion ; when Justina, that good creature, made her appearance. Miss, she cried, quite out of breath, Mr. Faldoni is here ; I have seen him ! She would imprudently have proceeded ; but I shrieked out perceiving your friend's face overspread with a deadly paleness, and her head reclined on her bosom. Her attendants supported, and gave her drops to smell to. I went out of the room, but returned soon after with her mother. At sight of her, Teresa endeavoured to extend her arms for a filial embrace, but in vain, they fell languidly in her lap. Oh ! Madam — she could utter no more ; her voice was suppressed by her tears. Madam de St. Cyran pressing the sweet girl to her bosom, said, why, child of my heart, this everlasting grief ? Am not I your affectionate mother, at all times ready to anticipate the least of your wishes ? With this she gently wiped the tears from Teresa's eyes. Your fair friend hid her face some time in her mother's bosom, then suddenly raising it, exclaimed, he is then here ! — He would fain see you, replied Madam de St. Cyran. — See me !

me ! See me !—She blushed, turned pale, and articulated in a different tune, Ah ! what will he see ? A phantom, a victim for a moment withheld from the tomb. Then putting her hand to her heart, Of what use is this visit ? Is he not here ? Can his image ever leave me ? I should behold his tears ; I should hear his lamentations ; and be wounded with unutterable anguish. Spare me the distressing picture ! — Well ! my Teresa, he shall not present himself ; you shall have your way—He shall not present himself ! I must, then, never see him more. God of life ! how weak is the human heart ! Ah ; let him come and enjoy his triumph ! Let him see the condition to which he has reduced me ; if pity is not banished from his breast, he will forego sentiments reciprocally destructive to our peace.— She had not finished, ere Faldoni flew to her feet ; for he had waited at the chamber door to learn his fate. Grief and fear seemed to divide his emotions ; with lifted hands he threw himself on the carpet before his angel, and continued there fixed as a statue. Teresa made him rise, and on retracing his features, rolled her eyes towards Heaven, then suddenly closed them. Madam de St. Cyran's arms embraced her, and that excellent lady desired Faldoni to withdraw. But to what advice could he attend ? At the feet of his mistress, his eyes fixed on her, his lips suspended in their utterance, his ears ready to devour her whispers, scarce daring to breathe, every limb trembling, he watched with anxiety for the first symptoms of returning life in Teresa. She at length awoke from her lethargy, when Faldoni started up, gazed eagerly on his charmer,

mer, and uttered some unintelligible accents. See ! Sir, said she, with great solemnity, the consequences of a clandestine acquaintance. Then turning to her mother, Madam, forgive your daughter ! Heaven has sufficiently punished me for my misconduct. Then addressing me, dear pastor, she cried, in what a state of humiliation do you find me ! How are we degraded by our passions ! I must be indebted to a man for consolation ! My being depended on his presence ; or I should have existed only to suffer ! Now looking at Faldoni, Why are you come back ? What can you hope for ? Alas ! I have no longer charms to allure you ; the bloom of my youth is blasted ; I am stepping into the grave. Perceiving that he wept, she resumed, in a softened tone, dry your tears, Faldoni ; they flow in vain ; I can never be yours ; my father has acquainted me with his will ; an angry father's curse hangs over my head, unless I forego my visionary schemes of felicity ; not the affectionate mother who hears my declaration can rescue me from parental tyranny ; her resource, like mine, is only in tears. Let us therefore abandon the fond hope of our union ; we must not think of it. I have given my nurse a pledge of my friendship for you ; preserve it for my sake ; let it ever speak to your heart the sincerity of my attachment. Here a sigh escaped her ; and she exclaimed, so tender a friendship ! an inclination that seemed to have the sanction of Heaven, attended with such dreadful consequences ! Who shall boast of earthly happiness ? I do not bid you adieu ; to pronounce that sentence would distress myself ; but of what use is it for us to meet

meet again? If you can flee from me; if you can forget me; if by giving up the idea of me, you can be more serene and happy; forget me; renounce me; you have my consent; fly from Teresa, and let a worthier object compensate for my loss. She would have continued her discourse; words crowded to her lips; her eloquence and sensibility, after a long period of silence and restraint, naturally sought relief in the disclosure of the inmost sentiments of her soul. Faldoni, dejected by the speech of his mistress, approached her with awe, and resuming his situation at her feet, exclaimed, in the name of that bountiful Being whom you resemble; in the name of your affectionate mother, and of this worthy friend; and may I not add? in the name of my love; in pity, Miss, do not drive a wretch to despair, by such rigid menaces? Why should you covet my death? Then pressing by turns our hands, he conjured us to intercede for him. Dear Teresa, said Madam de St. Cyran, if your life depends on the exhilaration of hope, be assured that every thing shall be done in my power for your satisfaction; and that it shall not be my fault, if you do not make that worthy man happy; he deserves to be so; his virtues justify your choice. Teresa's languid features, brightened with a gentle smile; dear Mamma, you then excuse this weakness; you give a sanction to the wishes of your daughter! Well! said she, addressing Faldoni, receive my promise to be none but yours. She clapped her hands in a transport of joy; would have spoken more; wept; danced about; and could express her gratitude only in broken murmurs. For my part this scene

scene affected me to tears ; and wishing to give it a religious solemnity, I took the lovers by the hand ; then looking at Madame de St. Cyran, said, Nature has done her part, Madam ; it is time for you to perform yours. She answered with surprise, what can I do ? Favourable wishes only are in my power, and may Heaven gratify them ! My authority extends no farther. At least, I replied, you may promise me your consent to their union. She did not hesitate a moment. Then lifting my hands to heaven, I cried, fountain of mercies, turn the heart of a relentless father ! May he cease to oppose the dictates of nature, and the happiness of this innocent couple ! Grant that I may lend them to thy altar ! that I may sanctify their spotless loves ; and ere I am re-united to thee, may my closing eyes witness their felicity !—Faldoni, then, stooping on his knee before Teresa, took the bottom of her gown, and pressed it eagerly to his lips. Daughter of heaven, he exclaimed, you whom I dare not yet call by the tender name of bride, here let me vow ever-lasting affection to you ; may my life expire the moment my false heart ceases to love you ! Madame de St. Cyran permitted him to kiss the hand of her daughter ; Teresa's cheeks were flushed with a charming crimson ; her imagination and her heart took the alarm ; she desired to be alone, and we left her to gather undisturbed these first blossoms of pleasure.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

AM I recalled to life, only to prepare for new afflictions ? Fate was ready to drop the curtain.—When he returned, the destroyer of my peace made his appearance. My foolish heart beat with its old palpitation ; my blood recovered its mazy course ; joy, so long a stranger to me, enlivened my soul like glittering dew drops on the morning rose ; my conscious bosom owned, that the deceitful world had not entirely lost its charms. Can there then be left any opening for me that leads to felicity ? Vain flattery ! my dear mother labours to no purpose to enliven me with that confidence. What can she do ? Can the universe lend me arms against the most tyrannic of fathers. Yet I abandon myself to my darling fondness, and time滑ides away imperceptibly in its agreeable illusions. My mother, the Curate, Faldoni, and I, form a delightful society. He lodges with my nurse, but calls on us every day, and we are as much together as possible. The Curate sometimes fetches him early in the morning to dine at the castle. The two gentlemen, of such congenial minds, have formed the most intimate acquaintance ; and I triumph with a virtuous pride, to see my choice sanctioned by the friendship of that worthy minister. I glory in the esteem inspired by Faldoni, in all who have the happiness to know him ; and flatter myself that the

the whole world must excuse my partiality for the most amiable of mankind. Dear cousin, how does he interest my heart, and what new claims does he gain every day to my attachment ! None ever possessed the social virtues in a more exalted degree ; I never view him without veneration ; he has taught me that man is born for the protection of his fellow creatures. With a commanding ascendency he checks intrusive rashness, and stings with a guilty blush the brow of audacity. His manly and firm aspect announces the magnanimity of his soul ; it is visible that he has not forfeited his own esteem, and that without vanity, he is duly sensible of his own worth. What are human institutions, titles, honours, riches, compared with the distinction of virtue and personal merit ? Had Faldoni been born in the deepest obscurity, he would have blazed with a lustre that might have graced a throne. Good, generous, of the most exquisite sensibility, his heart glows with affection for all mankind ; and it is my joy to say, such is the husband of my choice.

As we are so near the forest, we have formed the design of visiting the banks of the Lignon, and the fertile plain watered by its streams : a relation of my mother, who enjoys an estate near Montbrison, has determined us to undertake this journey. We set out at day-break ; it was a delightful morning ; the sun, appearing in the horizon, gilded that beautiful chain of hills on which the eye dwells with rapture when you enter the lower forest. We beheld the valley rendered so famous by the loves of Astrea and Celadon ; the pastoral style still prevailed ; the neighbouring hills were whitened with

with sheep ; the shepherdeffes, whose beauty might vie with the fair Arcadians, sat beside their shepherds ; the music of the pipe, and the song of the leader of the flocks saluted the ravished ear. What a sweet serenity is inspired by the charms of rural life ! Softened with the view of the smiling landscape, my tumultuous passions subsided, and my soul sunk into a tender melancholy. How happy, said I to myself, were the Dianas, and Astreas, who spent their days here in company with their lovers ! Nothing could injure their pleasures ; no unnatural prejudice thwarted their inclinations ; no tyrannical law biassed their affections ; love was the offspring of their own choice ; and all their days dedicated to its indulgence, were brilliant and serene. These reflections, made on the road, inspired me with a pensiveness, which Faldoni perceived, and endeavoured in vain to remove. My mother entertained us with an account of the venerable host we were going to visit. Monsieur de Themine is a gentleman who has retired to his estate, and who studies nothing but the happiness of his tenants. His house rises on the declivity of a hill, from whence you have a view of enamelled meadows, winding hills that extend in many a curvature to the horizon, and streams that flowing from the bosom of the vallies, are at length lost in the depth of obscure forests.— The village lies below the castle ; scattered here and there are seen the glistening white walls of little farm houses, just distinguishable from the clustering trees ; the rustic dwellings are defended by hedges of hawthorn, while around them reigns a charming confusion of sheep at pasture, children

dren at play, husbandmen at plough, and women engaged in domestic duties.

Mr. de Themine gave us a hearty welcome ; his salute spoke the friend of hospitality ; an elegant simplicity supplies with him the place of luxury, and excludes every wish for farther gratification. A glimpse of the gardens ravished me ; art there was concealed under the appearance of rusticity ; none of that dull symmetry which squares our groves, clips our trees, and violently struggles with the pleasing caprices of nature.—Here a tufted wood ; there verdant meads ; farther off rocks strewn with shells, and inviting with cool grottos, while fountains that gushed from their summits vanished with a gentle murmur beneath the shade of the lime. You see nothing here, said Monsieur de Themine, but unpolished nature ; yet this whimsical diversity, in which she delights to sport, is, in my opinion, the true reason that we never view her works with indifference. Let others account for the effect produced by a sight of palaces and their sumptuous gardens, where human industry has united every effort to proclaim the owner's greatness ; the first view of them only excites a cold admiration, and we grow insensibly fatigued with their uniform magnificence. The imagination despises the limits of art ; wherever she discovers the hand of labour, she concludes that it was possible to have done better ; and her expectation is disappointed. The vain monuments of man are bounded by his weakness ; but the productions of nature are like herself, sublime.

Monsieur de Themine pointed out to us the effects of that industry which he had established ;

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it presented a scene of ease and cheerfulness, simplicity and smiling order, the image of peace and freedom. He entered with the villagers into their minutest domestic concerns, settled their differences, furnished them with the best advice, inquired for the distressed, supplied them with implements for labour, or allotted them a division of land. I never bestow money, said he ; to do that is a mistaken charity ; those who would reap with me, must sow ; if you enable the common people to live without working, you are an encourager of idleness, and the destroyer of their industry. It has been my care to patronise agriculture by suitable rewards, by a readiness to improve the stock of the husbandman ; as I have made each inhabitant lord of his little spot, he is animated with a virtuous emulation to rival his neighbour, to which the consideration that he toils for himself, gives additional spirit. Thus I have revived in this happy country the charms of pastoral times, which inspired our forefathers with an idea of the golden age, and have rendered the plains of Lignon the favourite theme of our poets.

The villager is a stranger to the official representatives of justice ; her balance is cheerfully submitted to in my own decisions. My tribunal is the shade of an ancient oak, under which I sit at stated periods. On Sundays the young people assemble in the meadows, and amuse themselves in different exercises ; the old men adjudge the rewards that I distribute to the conquerors. In the evening they dance to the flute and tabor ; at these interviews their innocent hearts form the first connection ; I am delighted with the discovery

very of their infant passions, as it recalls to my mind the happiness of my youth ; after inquiry into the manners and characters of the lovers, at their desire I give my sanction to the union.

Do you not join with me in admiring this excellent man ? Have you not a wish to reside in such a delightful neighbourhood ? For my part, I was never so enamoured of the fields, and at times am inclined to forsake every thing, assume the crook, and lead my flocks along these flowery hills ; with a provision though, that I should not be alone, but accompanied by my faithful shepherd. I am absolutely charmed with this kind of life. Days so circling with felicity and peace, that care and anxiety can never intrude ! Every morning would rise bright and serene ; every golden hour would dance away on down.

But I must return to Monsieur de Themine, whose conversation I have impertinently broken into, to amuse you with my own fallies. The minister and I, continued he, alternately make the rounds of the parish. The sick are by my orders conveyed to a healthy situation, and till their recovery, their fields are cultivated by other hands, to whom I stand accountable for this extraordinary labour. My infirmary is seldom used ; for regular exercise, blameless pleasure, cheerfulness of mind, wholesome food, and pure air, support the peasants to a good old age, without any inconvenience but the usual infirmities of that period.

I am often a party in their evening entertainments ; their artless songs bring to my remembrance a time which I can never think of without emotion ; I retrace situations formerly dear to me ;

me ; and the distance of thirty years vanishes in a moment. But recovering from my dream, I sigh to find myself alone in this happy crowd ; and regret the days when the world was not yet a desert to me. My reason, called to my assistance, struggles long to banish these gloomy impressions ; while they reign, the foundations of my happiness are shaken ; my solitude shocks me ; and is dreary around me ; my books, pictures, gardens, lose their charms ; I fly to my hamlet ; the tears of joy that my presence occasions, check my own ; from making others happy, I endeavour to be so myself, and at length recover my tranquillity. You will pardon this egotism, said he, with a smile. In this cool valley, by the side of that shady fountain, let us enjoy the frugal dinner prepared for us. Only remember that you are in the company of shepherds, and do not expect the dainties of luxurious cities. Through paths bordered by honey-suckles, we arrived at the foot of the hill, and found by a crystalline spring, a charming dinner set out for us on the grass. Though the heat was excessive, and it was at that hour when the sun reigns with greatest fury, we were refreshed by a delicious coolness on its borders ; it seemed as if all the zephyrs of that quarter had agreed to sport under the friendly shade. Pears, pomegranates, plums hung on every side from the trees, inviting us, with their tempting bloom, to gather them ; milk just pressed from the cow foamed in elegantly-turned earthen vessels ; simple, selected dishes were perfumed by baskets of flowers which crowned the rural banquet. The little company, including every one who was dear to me, the sylvan style, the lovely scene, the solitude, the re-

past, the shade, the coolness, all conspired to charm me ; and the serene satisfaction of my soul glowed in every vein. Faldoni, in a transport, said to the Curate, here let us pitch our tents, and bid adieu to the treacherous world. You shall be to us the grand druid, Adam, and we will bless your patriarchal government. So saying, he started up and engraved our names on the bark of the adjoining trees. The Curate caught the enthusiasm, and exclaimed, how foolish are men to travel far in quest of happiness which is ever at their own command ! Why do they not plunge into the propitious shades for an asylum from the passions that tyrannise in cities ? Here the wildest animals, the tenants of the air, and the most despicable worm, are undisturbed and happy. Divine nature, thy voice invites us to thee, thy beauty presents us on every side with a refuge from calamity. Behold the plains, the groves, the fruitful orchards, the limpid streams ; earth teeming with riches, heaven majestic in beauty ! And yet before the first glimmering of morn, we besiege the antichambers of the Great ; we would sell our lives to the pride of patronage ; we beg for golden chains, though this corner of earth, bread and liberty, is all that nature requires ! How wretched is your situation in cities ! Who there enjoys his own existence ! What a dungeon for a noble, independent soul, big with its own energy ! How impotent is the farce of pomp and greatness in the estimation of the wise ! How little is the intention of nature regarded ! What becomes of the equality of mankind ! Every right is confounded in society ; man frames a ladder for his fellow-creature's ambition ; forges the statue

statue of an imaginary deity, and then adores it. Here at least I worship only the King of the universe ; he hears the vows I offer, and I am free from the apprehension of their being rejected. When on a fine summer's day, sitting at the foot of a tree with Plutarch or Fenelon, I view nature smiling round me in all her charms ; when I hear the melody of the forest ; when the aromatic souls of flowers are communicated to my scent by the gentle breezes ; then, in the ravishment of my senses, I raise my thanksgivings to God ; bless him for having called me from nothing, for having bestowed on me a capability to taste the beauties of nature, and placed before my eyes the real goods of life, and the never-fating variety of his creation.

This charming discourse was interrupted by the sound of flagelets and hautboys ; when a company of villagers, rather neat than fine, made their appearance. They began dancing ; we joined them ; and night surprised us in the midst of our pastime, which we prolonged, by the light of the moon. The hour of separation, to my regret, came at length ; I lamented the loss of the last happy day I was to enjoy ; and with a wishful look at the delightful country, bade it adieu. Who can tell if I shall ever view it once more ? nothing escapes the influence of change and succession ; the pleasures of the evening do not gild the morrow. As we passed an hermitage in a flowery valley, we were tempted to enter it ; for Monsieur de Themine had told us wonders of the anchorite who resided there. He had lived in it five years, detached from society ; the occasion, that fatal passion love, and the loss by death of the beloved object ; he

sighed away his days in this terrestrial paradise, as if it had been a place of torment. We found him sitting at a table with a book open ; a dying lamp glimmered through the dusky apartment, which had no furniture but a straw bed, and a woman's night-gown that hung from the cieling. He looked anxiously at the company, and, on seeing me, started. I supposed that my sex and age brought to his remembrance an affecting object, and I began to blame a visit which might make his old wounds bleed anew. Yet he appeared to receive and hear us with tolerable composure, and answered our questions without hesitation ; but Faldoni having ventured to mention his loss to him, at the first word he dropped, the hermit arose distractedly, the tears gushed from his eyes, he stamped on the ground, and said in a tone which made us tremble, she is there ! and removing some planks that covered a coffin, he presented a spectacle of horror that still harrows my imagination. Faldoni exclaimed, you loved, and did not follow her ! He turned to me, his eyes swimming with tears ; mine were not dry, and I was conscious that our hearts beat in unison. Young man, replied the hermit, I do more, I continue in the world, and weep for her loss. If it be your fate to love, intreat Heaven, that you may escape my destiny ; or you will own that it is easier to die than to imitate me. My mother made many apologies for having disturbed him, and we returned to our carriage, deeply impressed with this affecting scene. In crossing the grove of poplars near the hermitage, I shuddered with horror, for the moon-beams formed a thousand capricious shapes in the shade, and presented a group of melancholy

choly figures wandering, as it were, among the tombs ! The murmur of the streams, and the leaves shook by the wind, resembled the doleful notes of lamentation. I saw the phantom of the unfortunate lady plunge into the gloomy glades of the forest ; a tremor unknown before seized my soul. Such is the end of sublunary pleasure ! What necessity was there for our visiting the hermitage ? I shall never forget the owner, or his mistress ; still appears that dreadful coffin ; sometimes I fancy myself shut in it, Faldoni by the side ; the little he said to the hermit dwells on my ear. Ah ! cousin, how congenial are my own sentiments with his ! Woe to those who love ! But whoever ventures to love, let it be for life, and death ; they have then but one prayer to make, that they may expire together !

LETTER XLIV.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

O MY Teresa ! what a charming walk we yesterday enjoyed. I fancied myself transported with you to Thessaly, among nymphs and shepherdesses. What a delightful habitation ! What a beautiful country ! Let us bid adieu to the odious world ; let us forsake artificial cities, and the wretched crowds that people them ; let us give ourselves up to the enjoyment of nature, and partake of happiness with the good creatures who

are so well acquainted with its value. Charming friend, why should we be ingulphed in the vortex of society ? How many precious moments we lose in the insipid circle of tedious amusements, painful services, unavoidable dissimulation, and fashionable restraint ? Are not our souls strangers to the surrounding crowd ? Or are their manners and conversation suited to our own ? Ah ! let us fly to embrace felicity in this her asylum; let my mother, that dear part of us, and our amiable pastor, be our companions ! A blooming solitude, a habitation void of pomp and luxury, a garden, and groves intersected by living streams, will form our rural riches. If we can add to these a few acres of vineyard sunned on by the sun; a field of wheat waving its yellow treffes to the breeze; a little pond that may afford us amusement with its sportive inhabitants; and a yard the well-peopled dominion of a feathered monarch; what can be wanting to our wishes ? The ever varying delights of a country life shall fill up the enjoyment of all our days; each returning morning shall awake us to new pleasure. Thus year on year will roll away without regret, and we shall grow old imperceptibly. I will myself be the principal gardener; you shall see me, sweet friend, stooping with the rake, and bathed in my own dews, courting nature to support my family, and pleased with my industry, you will say, the husband whom I have chosen is not unworthy of me ! My children, taught by my example, will despise idleness, confess that man is born for labour, and that he ought to pay it as a price for the benefits he receives from the teeming earth. They will learn to respect the condition of a husbandman, and

and think it better to cultivate their own garden than to corrupt their manners by acquiring the dangerous polish of the city. We will collect around us the honest villagers, and together form but one virtuous family. Our meals shall be enlivened with the follies of mirth and freedom ; the labourer shall repair to them for refreshment from toil ; our farmer, his wife, his children, the Curate of the hamlet, some worthy veteran retired from service, whom we may beat up in his rural retreat, shall form the circle of our guests. The conversation at table shall never turn on the vices or follies of the absent ; the city shall not be our theme, may it for us be lost in oblivion for ever ! One shall explain the best method of enriching the land with seed, and what are the surest remedies for the disorders of cattle ; another shall relate some anecdote of benevolence, or draw the picture of domestic felicity. We, my Teresa, will point out the path of wisdom, the tranquillity of the mind, and its sum of enjoyment ; how the soul may rise superior to the calamities of life, and preserve an equal temper under the frowns of fortune ; how the moderation of desires enriches the good in the humblest condition. Divine felicity ! undisturbed repose ! ye delights unknown to the depraved ! take full possession of our enraptured bosoms ! What can the heart desire more than serenity of mind, the enjoyment of the real goods of nature, the bloom of youth, and the balm of health ? I know not, my charmer, whether the beauties of this my favourite picture meet equally with your approbation ? but a sketch of rural life ravishes and inflames my imagination ; an agreeable prospect in the country transports

me ; I never view a flowery meadow, a tufted grove, a valley shaded with verdure, without abandoning my soul to the most pleasurable ideas ; I feel at the time an inward satisfaction, a freedom from ambition, a soothing inactivity, which no colours of eloquence can display. In this pure balsamic atmosphere, impregnated with the essences of flowers and the vegetable odours of so many plants, I breathe without restraint ; my organs dilate with freedom, and my blood dances in every vein ; my thoughts flow with readiness, my judgment is clearer, and my heart lighter ; I forget mankind, their passions, their intrigues, the injuries they have done me, their contemptible pride, and their cruel prejudices. Thus exalted in meditation, I raise myself to the Divinity, converse with the ever Blessed, declare to him my pleasures and my pains, nor wish for the mediation of men between him and me. I often examine the philosophy of my understanding, investigate the recesses of my heart, erect a tribunal for my errors, condemn or absolve myself, consider the good that remains for me to perform, and always start from these agreeable reveries with the resolution of becoming a better man. Sometimes the brightness of the moon in a still evening, brings to my mind the image of countries enlightened by its beams, and formerly the scenes of my entertainment in my travels ; my fancy darts across the ocean, glistening with silver lustre, in majesty like that I admired, when my vessel floated on the waves under the auspices of the queen of night. I mingle with my old acquaintance in the Antilles ; my soul, softened by such interesting remembrances, enjoys again the visions of pleasure that exhilarated my youth. Often in my solitary

solitary walks I form schemes of happiness for my friends as well as myself. What delightful hours have been my portion in these agreeable reveries ! I have enjoyed in idea the riches created by my imagination ; have viewed enchanting prospects around me ; and have, my dear Terefa, conversed with you ; waited at your side ; conducted you to a cottage brightened by your presence, and rendered in my estimation more magnificent than a palace. There I have partaken of your domestic attentions ; have seen you with peculiar sensibility and benevolence welcome the unfortunate, and send them away with the smile of content ; comfort a falling family, supremely blest in being known to you, and winning your protection. With what transport have I witnessed your unassuming goodness ! When shall the wish of my heart be gratified ! When shall I vow at your feet to live and to die with you ! Alas ! Time flies on the swiftest pinions ; the hours vanish beyond recovery ; and my life is consumed in fruitless expectation. The bloom of your youth too will fade, like a fair rose that withers in the scorching beams of noon. Oh ! my Terefa, must I still continue to glow with desire, to hope, to languish, and to despair ? Must I view the season of happiness fly away without enjoying it ? Were our existence here immortal, I should say to my soul, wait with patience and be happy. But every moment shortens the term of my earthly residence, and life will soon close without fruit or a second spring. Let us not deceive ourselves, my lovely friend, there are pleasures suited to every age ; but those vivifying juices that support and enliven our being, that elementary flame which rushes through our veins, giving energy to love, warmth

warmth and ravishment to the senses, those ethereal treasures of the animal system are exhausted when the bloom of youth decays. Desire loses its keenness ; and our maturity, at the same time that it renders our days more serene, deprives us of the enchantment of love. What business have we in the world, in our present wretched state of uncertainty ? Shall our happiness depend on the arbitrary will of a man, when the justice of the Supreme has formed us for each other, and irresistibly connects us by a mutual attachment ? Shall the sentence of a tyrant reverse the decree of fate, and precipitate us contrary to natural appointment, in an abyss of sufferings ? What law, engraven on brass, obliges us to bow beneath this cruel yoke ? Do you not hear a voice within say, be happy ; seize, while you may, the flash of evanescent pleasure ! To-morrow, this evening, perhaps in an hour, it is gone for ever. I conjure you, by Love, let us not trust to the disastrous chances of futurity ! let us not stake the colour of our lives on the puerile delusions of hope. O you, whom I have dared for once to call my wife, you who are dearer to me than myself, my friend, my companion, the charm and delight of my heart, listen to my prayer, and since an affectionate mother approves of my felicity, condescend to sanction it with your seal ; condescend to give me yourself for ever. Let your lover lead you to the altar. Ah ! come, my dear Teresa ! come, and receive the vow that I make, to adore you to the last pulse of my life ! My swelling heart overflows with love ; it pants for a disclosure of its passion ; languishes and consumes with its flame. The world around me, where I do not trace you appears, a desert ; melancholy

I anchor and forlorn, my mind sees the face of nature wrapped in funereal gloom. I can no longer exist without you ; I glow with impatient desire to fold you to my breast ; a thousand phantoms, formed by my sickly imagination, continually disturb me on my pillow, imbipter the hours of rest, and leave me no respite at the return of light. It is your company alone, my angel, that restores me the serenity of my soul.— You put to flight all those inauspicious vapours, as the lustre of the morning dispels the shades ; a word from your lips, a glance from your eyes, gives me composure and spirit. But what shall I do ? Heavens ! what will become of me, should you be snatched from me ; should a father—Ah ! his name freezes me with alarm ! I dread his return ; an unaccountable presentiment tells me that it will prove our ruin. Let us make haste to prevent it. Leave your riches behind ; bring only your inestimable graces. Our asylum is near ; nature has adorned it with her own hand ; and pleasure shall embellish it ; my little fortune will be adequate to our wants ; and for what can we wish beside ? A fondness for superfluities only makes splendid wretches ; and he who bounds not his desires, is truly poor.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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